WILL GLOBALIZATION PLAY IN PEORIA? CLASS, RACE AND NATION IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY, 1948-2000

BY

JASON KOZLOWSKI

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2011

Urbana, Illinois

Doctoral Committee:

Professor James R. Barrett, Chair
Professor David R. Roediger
Professor Mark H. Leff
Associate Professor Rosemary Feurer, Northern Illinois University

Abstract

Deindustrialization and the globalization of labor processes fundamentally altered the lives of working-class Americans, both at work and in their communities, in the second half of the twentieth century. As a result, unions and especially the industrial workers belonging to them existed in a far different, less certain, and less optimistic world than their counterparts at the end of World War Two. America's economic and industrial hegemony after the war buckled under the assault from within, especially with the proliferation of global manufacturing systems, and without through intensified foreign competition. Plant closings and technological changes such as computerization and automation jeopardized working-class prospects for upward mobility through manual labor. Once-dominant labor unions in manufacturing industries such as earthmoving equipment, steel, auto, electronics, and textiles suffered steep and, thus far, irreversible losses in numbers and strength. The consequences have been deep and largely deleterious, with workers facing heightened competition for good paying but increasingly scarce industrial jobs, the drastic decline and political influence of organized labor, and a radically recalibrated balance of power in labor relations in favor of employers.

This dissertation examines the globalization of work processes, the destructive forces and consequences of deindustrialization, and their impact on labor relations between Caterpillar Inc. and the United Auto Workers from 1948 to 2000. It analyzes the ways in which workers as laboring consumers experienced, understood, and responded to the increasingly interconnected and unstable global economy in the postwar period. In the process, the dissertation proffers a critique of labor relations in the US, the bureaucratic unionism that has become entrenched within it, and the struggles within unions and local communities.

Incorporating social, labor, and business history, this study contributes to the literature on globalization and the decline of the labor movement by connecting myriad sites such as the shop floor, local communities, federal policies, and transnational trade and labor-relations strategies. Utilizing myriad archival sources such as corporate and union newspapers, grievance and arbitration cases, and internal union documents, as well as oral histories with current and former Caterpillar workers and UAW officials, the dissertation illustrates the complex and often constraining nexus of social, economic, political, and nationalistic forces facing workers in a declining industrial landscape.

Acknowledgements

Generous funding from the Illinois State Research Society and the Department of History afforded opportunities for multiple research trips, the time to write, and allowed the chance to present my work history conferences. Research trips provided a lens into the amazing, professional, and generous work that librarians perform. My sincere thanks to William LaFevre, Louis Jones, and the tremendous staff of assistants at the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University in Detroit, to Katie Dorsey at the former Institute for Labor and Industrial Relations (ILIR) Library at the University of Illinois, to the terrific staff at the Peoria Public Library, and to the wonderful research librarians at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois for all their assistance, photocopying, and tracking down materials.

When I first visited the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in March 2003, I was immediately enchanted by the atmosphere, the amazing library, and the campus architecture. All these pale in comparison to the brilliant intellectualism, unwavering collegiality, and inherent decency of the colleagues I have been blessed to encounter. Studying with and learning from them has been most enriching. While no list can do justice to all deserving, special thanks to Terri Barnes, Clare Crowston, Richard Esbenschade, Lillian Hoddeson, Kristin Hoganson, Frederick Hoxie, Nils Jacobsen, Diane Koenker, Craig Koslofsky, Joseph Love, Mark Micale, Kathryn Oberdeck, David Prochaska, Dana Rabin, Ken Salo, Dorothee Schneider, Mark Steinberg, and Fanon Wilkins. Many thanks as well to Abdulai Addrisu,Anita Bravo, Jing Jing Chang, Kristina Durocher-Wilson, Jennifer Guiliano, Brian Ingrassia, Mike Lehman, Brandon Mills, Ben Murphy, Karen Rodriguez'G, Stephanie Seawell, T.J. Tallie, and Brian Yates.

Special thanks must go to the Working-Class History Reading Group, easily one of the best and most rewarding features of my graduate student life. Its many participants over the years include David Bates, Heidi Dodson, David Hageman, Steven Hageman, Ian Hartman, Julilly Kohler-Hausmann, Ashley Howard, Tom Mackaman, Bryan Nicholson, Kerry Pimblott, Emily Pope-Obeda, Thilo Schimmel, Zach Sell, and Anthony Sigismondi. Several colleagues deserve special thanks for their deep and abiding commitment to my project, from its inception and through its many, seemingly circuitous iterations. Will Cooley deserves special praise for his overall thoughtfulness and for steering me toward numerous materials and incidents that proved vital to the dissertation. He is a magnificent young intellectual. The weekly chinwags over coffee with Mike Rosenow, and social occasions with him and his family, were among the most invigorating and illuminating one could have with a colleague. He is the type of scholar and friend I strive to be daily, if not as gracefully and naturally as Mike.

Every graduate student should be as fortunate as I was to have had such outstanding mentors on my dissertation committee. Rosemary Feurer, Mark Leff, and David Roediger at all points made this a better dissertation, and me a deeper thinker, through keen insight, creativity, and innovative pedagogy.

Thanks scarcely convey the gratitude I have for my adviser and mentor, Jim Barrett. His unwavering devotion to his scholarship, his teaching, and his many graduate students does much to explain how he maintains a grueling schedule that would fell most others. He has done more to fuse intellectual with community work than any teacher I know, and I am proud to be his friend.

My deepest debts lay with my family. My father Paul is and has always been a bastion of love, strength, and knowledge in matters mechanical, political, as well as labor and work-related. He always told me, "I work with my hands so you don't have to." I can only hope that what manual labor I perform now—if in far less onerous weather and working conditions than those my father endured—justifies all that he did. My stepmother Sherron is equally committed to improving the lives of working people everywhere. She and her side of the family convey closeness and embracing comfort that enriches the heart. My sister Jen is as loving and supportive as a brother could ask for. Her wit and contagious laughter make me smile as I write.

To my wife Sherry, daughter Gabby, and son Jonah I unquestionably owe the most. Gabby and Jonah and their love, boundless brilliance, beautiful smiles, and endless mirth were life-affirming breaths of fresh air during dissertation work, research trips, late nights, and bleary-eyed mornings. Being their father is nothing short of a privilege. No husband could be as lucky as I am to have met such an amazing, smart, sharp, unselfish, and beautiful partner in life as Sherry. Her tireless support for me and my work inspires me every day to be a better partner, scholar, and person. I would be nowhere without her, I love her forever, and I would not trade her or our children for the entire world. They represent decency, hope, and promise in our difficult and uncertain times.

Table of Contents

Introduction

"Will Globalization Play in Peoria? Class, Nation, and Race in the Global Economy, 1948-2000," examines the impact of global production and international economic competition on Caterpillar workers in Peoria, Illinois. It traces the formation and renegotiation of workers' class, national, racial, and gender identities at work and in their communities, the evolving and often contentious labor relations between the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the company, and the shifting topography of the workplace stemming from automation, outsourcing and the reorganization of job processes. It argues that the globalization of work fundamentally altered working-class identities, undermining both the nation's postwar economic dominance and unionized workers' position as America's "blue-collar elite."

Intense competition with ascendant Japanese companies also revealed deep divisions within the union, local communities, and the workplace about how to compete and survive in a period of economic decline. It contends that the UAW's embrace of joint labor-management programs in the 1980s eroded its militant traditions by reorienting its largely conservative members in Peoria toward a more business-friendly unionism, and submerging class consciousness under heightened nationalist fervor. This fatally undermined workers' capacity to resist Caterpillar's push for deep concessions in wage structures and work rules that it eventually won after strikes and shop-floor strife throughout the 1990s. As a result, the union's defeat accelerated employers' concessionary demands from other workers across the country, splitting the working class and its fortunes across generational lines and undoing important remnants of the New Deal order.

Caterpillar and the UAW, and their relationship, represent an excellent opportunity through which to analyze the impact of global production on workers. The company was at the

forefront of key business trends during and after World War Two—the centralization of economic and political power among large, monopolistic corporations; the expansion of big business across the globe for market domination and cheaper supplies of labor; and the honing of mass communication techniques to rationalize these two developments to communities, consumers, and employees. It was an early, aggressive force in the acceleration of globalization, emerging with other American businesses as dominant transnational corporations by the early 1960s. For its part, the UAW played an important role among the burgeoning US union movement in touting what it termed "free trade unionism" around the world, an amalgam of anti-communist policies, support for unions and governments supportive of America's Cold War objectives, a proponent of trade expansion and, as corporations began to relocate abroad in the 1960s, an advocate for closer ties with industrial unions around the world. Both, that is, thought and operated consistently but to different degrees on an international scale in this period.

This dissertation contributes to the scholarship of postwar labor history on several fronts. It engages a small but growing historiography on the strikes at Caterpillar while confronting its fairly exclusive focus on the centrality of the strikes themselves. Although these authors and labor relations scholars have delved deeply into the strikes' tactics, mistakes, outcomes and implications for the labor movement, they have done little to analyze and historicize working-class life at work and in Peoria. As a result, their preoccupation with what Victor Devinatz has termed the "heroic defeat" of the UAW has omitted serious analysis of antecedent events and trends that may elucidate why those strikes were defensive and, ultimately unsuccessful.[1] This

[1] Stephen Franklin, *Three Strikes: Labor's Heartland Losses and What They Mean for Working Americans* (NY: The Guilford Press, 2001); Isaac Cohen, "The Caterpillar Labor Dispute and the UAW, 1991-1998," *Labor Studies Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Winter 2003), 77-99; Victor G. Devinatz, "A Heroic Defeat: The Caterpillar Labor Dispute and the UAW, 1991-1998," *Labor Studies Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Summer 2005), 1-18; Phil McCall, "'We Had to Stick Together:' Individual Preferences, Collective Struggle, and the Formation of Social Consciousness," *Science and Society*, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 2008, 147-181.

study argues that the development of Caterpillar workers' class, racial, gender, and national identities is central to understanding how they encountered and responded to changing political and economic conditions in the postwar era. As the U.S. languished in a serious recession, unemployment rates rose dramatically, and a wave of factory closings swept across the nation, the UAW and its members jettisoned their historically adversarial relationship with Caterpillar in favor of joint labor-management programs which entailed extensive labor-management collaboration. "Jointness" was more than a strategy to retain good jobs, which appealed to the primarily male workforce of "breadwinners," but appealed to them and was presented to them as an avenue to national resurgence, a chance for the company remain competitive, and as a better and more "mature" approach to labor relations. This proved unsuccessful, and strengthened Caterpillar's hand in the coming years as it wrung contractual concessions from the union, and downsized its unionized factories by shifting production to nonunion facilities in the South, and moving others overseas.

The way in which deindustrialization unfolded at Caterpillar offers an important contribution to the vast scholarship on plant closings, and their impact upon workers and unions. For the most part, the stories in these important works offer readers finality—the factories close, companies relocate, unions lose members, and quality of life in the communities suffers.[2] The process of deindustrialization in Peoria, through Caterpillar, proceeded rather differently and more gradually than elsewhere, with crucial ramifications for their employees, and insights into understanding deindustrialization as not just a process, but a persistent *condition.* Watching deindustrialization unfold and linger, as much as witnessing and enduring factories closing,

[2] See for example Charles Craypo and Bruce Nissen eds., *Grand Designs: The Impact of Corporate Strategies on Workers, Unions, and Communities* (Ithaca: Cornell ILR Press, 1993); Steven P. Dandeneau, *A Town Abandoned: Flint, Michigan, Confronts Deindustrialization* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996); Steven High, *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969-1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); John Portz, *The Politics of Plant Closings* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1990).

shaped the strategies, responses, and perspectives of the community, workers, and the UAW in their attempts to salvage jobs, and develop new economic opportunities.

This study also complements and confronts the prevailing historiography on the UAW in the postwar period. Nelson Lichtenstein's early work on the UAW established shop floor politics and sociology as vital arenas for investigating the union's growth and the concomitant ossification of its ruling bureaucracy. By strictly regulating the grievance system, and by stamping out non-contractual shop floor militancy such as wildcat strikes, Walter Reuther and the union's leadership solidified its control over the union and its membership. At the same time, it reflected a convergence of interests with auto manufacturers who had sought, since the advent of the UAW, to eradicate militant unionism. The result, according to Lichtenstein, was the demise of postwar unionism's potential for social democratic change.[3] Revisionists of postwar labor history and industrial relations have argued that Lichtenstein's early work erred by placing too much blame on the UAW and unions for contributing to their own decline, and devoting too little attention to the narrow sociopolitical parameters in which unions operated after World War Two. Critical of the implication that a "postwar labor accord" existed between labor and management, revisionists reemphasized the pivotal and persistent role the state has played in curtailing the power of organized labor in the postwar period. Even as unions grew stronger, they faced a resurgent, reorganized business community that developed innovative methods to communicate with the public at large, and persuade American employees and consumers to

[3] See for example Nelson Lichtenstein, "Conflict Over Workers Control: The Automobile Industry in World War II," in Michael H. Frisch and Daniel J. Walkowitz eds., *Working-Class America: Essays on Labor, Community, and American Society* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 284-311; "Great Expectations: The Promise of Industrial Jurisprudence and Its Demise, 1930-1960," in Nelson Lichtenstein and Howell John Harris eds., *Industrial Democracy in America: The Ambiguous Promise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 113-141.

accept its "right to manage."[4] Historians have reminded us that despite the growing influence of organized labor within the Democratic Party, labor has often seen its legislative agendas defeated, shunted aside for broader objectives, or watered down in the name of compromise. This has led critics of organized labor's political ties to denounce the "barren marriage" between unions and the Democratic Party, and to stress the defeats labor progressives such as Reuther suffered trying expand liberalism's potential for social democratic political change across racial and gender lines.[5] Additionally, scholarship has amply illustrated that the postwar period, well before the resurgence of the business-friendly political right sounded the attack on organized labor, was rife with conflict. The 1950s, often popularly portrayed as a staid period of political consensus, was as Jack Metzgar reminds one of the most strike-laden periods of the era. Later, Lichtenstein's own work more fully articulated his critique and rejection of the notion of a "postwar labor accord." [6]

This dissertation asserts that while revisionists have accurately recast our understanding of the limitations under which organized labor functioned, they have not completely refuted Lichtenstein's characterization that labor and business interests at times converged. Crucially, this dissertation contends that nationalism, especially economic nationalism, served as an area of convergence between unions and companies. While they defined national interests and priorities quite differently, and fought fiercely over the spoils of the nation's economic success, they

[4] Howell John Harris, *The Right to Manage: Industrial Relations Policies of American Business in the 1940s* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982); Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).
[5] Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the US Working Class* (NY: Verso, 1986); Kevin Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism 1945-1968* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).
[6] Ronald L. Filipelli, "The Historical Context of Postwar Industrial Relations," in Bruce Nissen ed., *US Labor Relations, 1945-1989; Accommodation and Conflict* (NY: Garland Publishing, 1990), 137-171; Bruce Nissen, "A Post-World War II 'Social Accord?' in Nissen ed., *US Labor Relations, 1945-1989*, 173-205; Jack Metzgar, *Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000); Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002).

expressed a common allegiance to the nation and importantly did so using similar themes, language, and images. Defined by John Fousek as a "'style of thought' through which individuals identify themselves as members," and including "a specific set of widely shared ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes, and images," postwar American nationalism afforded ample room for unions and businesses to coexist, if not always peacefully.[7] They shared values of American economic and political preeminence, the need for American businesses' success, anti-communism and, for the UAW and Caterpillar, support for free trade policies. This study posits that the workplace was a pivotal site for the formation and renegotiation of nationalist identity.

In critical and innovative ways, this work illuminates the growth of union bureaucracies that proliferated in the era of business unionism. Local 974 provides an ideal lens into the power and pitfalls of union bureaucracy, for it represented at its height about 20,000 workers from several Caterpillar factories in and around Peoria. Studying the function, bargaining strategies, and in-fighting of this large local, which was far larger than any other in the company, reveals that fragmentation between workers, between union locals and with the International, and on the factory floor was an important and ultimately corrosive element within the union. Although the union was often successful in marshalling support for bargaining objectives that yielded steady financial gains and job protections for its members, its diffuse, unwieldy structure, and at times its indifference to regularly informing and educating its membership alienated many. Additionally, local 974's turbulent early history with the UAW International fostered a relationship in which the International was for the most part a distant dues-collecting entity, but also on occasion a heavy-handed presence when it and local leaders clashed. All this had deleterious ramifications for the local, especially when the company implemented widespread

[7] John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

changes in how it organized work routines, and how it communicated with employees. The union's lack of internal cohesion left ample space for Caterpillar to inculcate company objectives such as efficiency and cost cutting that won over many union members. The effort here is thus to synthesize the emphasis on continued labor-management conflict and corporate anti-unionism that revisionists have rightly recognized, with Lichtenstein's focus on the shop floor and toward unions to better understand how unions and their members may have also contributed to their own declining power.

In order to examine the impact of global production on working-class Americans in the postwar period, this dissertation is organized both chronologically and thematically. Chapter 1, Cat and Community: A Multinational Corporation in an 'All-American City' examines the social, economic, and spatial development of Peoria and its surrounding communities, as well as the growth of Caterpillar into an important multinational corporation, until 1970. It contends that the growth of the company and region were intertwined, fundamentally shaping the opportunities and identities of the Peoria region as a new form of "company town" due its position as Peoria's largest employer. Its expansion ordered social relations through its preferential hiring policies, and its development of modified corporate welfare programs played a significant role in garnering community and employee support.

Chapter 2, Grappling with Globalization: Labor Relations and the Limits of Solidarity and Community in the Era of Global Production, centralizes life on the shop floor of Caterpillar's factories. Tracing the rise of the UAW to its rivalry with and the ultimate demise of the left-wing Farm Equipment Workers (FE), it analyzes the growth of the union's largest local outside the automobile industry. Everyday labor relations between company and union, employer and employee, revealed shifting power dynamics that profoundly shaped social relations. The

workplace emerges as a complex nexus of conflict not only between the union and management, but also importantly within Local 974 itself.

Chapter 3, The Death of Contractualism: Labor Relations, Nationalism, and Race In the Era of Deindustrialization, studies the various crises confronting the American working class and organized labor, beginning in the 1970s generally and befalling Caterpillar and its employees by the early 1980s. The shop floor served as an incubator for nationalism and racial identity. Heightened international competition between American companies and their resurgent counterparts particularly in Japan intensified nationalist sentiments, resulting in the racial 'othering' of the Japanese. This transpired in urban and work spaces in which the dominant white racial group enjoyed sufficient distance from the 'other,' paralleling the more localized but still largely segregated residential spaces between whites and the smaller African American population in Peoria. Deindustrialization, local plant closures, and changes in the UAW International and Local 974 leadership converged to usher in a period of jointness.

The last two chapters directly engage the struggles at work, on picket lines, and in factory towns between the UAW and Caterpillar. Chapter 4, 'Peoria Is Still a Company Town:' Parameters of Class, Community, and Nation, 1991-1995, covers Caterpillar's about-face turn from jointness as it demanded concessions from a weakened, more compliant UAW. This prompted the first of two unsuccessful strikes by the union, which the company broke when its threats to permanently replace workers led to unprecedented defections from the union ranks. The bitterness led to resurgent workplace militancy for the first time since the 1960s, fueling an innovative in-plant campaign that Caterpillar aggressively resisted. Chapter 5, 'Not Gracious Victors:' Defeat, Deindustrialization, and the Declining Fortunes of the American Working Class, 1995-2005, critically assesses the union's errant decision to forgo its in-plant campaign

and risk its fate on a picket line that proved more porous in 1994 than two years before. Racial conflicts in these heated disputes occurred within a wider context of resurgent racist incidents, exposing tensions in black-white relations that had been steadily improving.

Ultimately, this study suggests that any examination of working-class life and the broad, sweeping forces that affect it must at its core be a human story. This story, fraught with a range of emotions and perspectives—anger and betrayal, satisfaction and humiliation, fear and bravery—locates everyday people and their voices at the center of a protracted, brutal class struggle with profound implications for America's working class. It is central to understanding how the positions of organized labor and American workers have so dramatically declined as the "American century" drew to a close.

Chapter 1: Cat and Community: A Multinational Corporation in an 'All-American City'

Like its place in the earthmoving industry, Caterpillar dominates the urban landscape of Peoria, Illinois. It is difficult to miss its imprint in and around the mid-size city. Dealerships, billboard advertisements, and the massive parts facility just outside the city in Morton boldly announce the company's presence. As one approaches the city from the east on Interstate 74, Caterpillar's presence looms large over the city, for its multi-story corporate headquarters, facing east, rests on the west side of the Illinois River. As cars cross the Murray Bridge into Peoria, "CATERPILLAR" in large letters, resting atop the square gray structure of the corporate office, greets the eye. This is Caterpillar's city.

This chapter examines the growth of the company into a powerful multinational corporation, and its relationship to Peoria and the surrounding region from its founding in the early twentieth century until 1970. It also investigates the city's history and development into an important manufacturing hub in central Illinois. With a particular focus on race relations, this chapter seeks to answer three questions. How did race structure life at work and in the community? What impact did Peoria's rise as an industrial center have on the community? How did Caterpillar's expansion into a multinational company affect the consciousness and identity among Peorians? Examining these issues reveals the tensions between broad and often rapid social changes, and the persistent perceptions and realities of social difference that intersect the region.

The Growth of Peoria from a Frontier Town into a Backwater City

Nestled into the banks on the west side of the Illinois River, Peoria traces its origins to various Native American tribes who passed through the area, and French settlers who established a Catholic mission there in the early eighteenth century. With the establishment of a permanent

fort in 1778, Peoria became a small but important site for the lucrative fur trade with Native Americans, and also served as a milling station for farmers' produce in the Illinois River valley. During the War of 1812, the village of Peoria was plundered and burned by Captain Thomas E. Craig and his soldiers, under the pretense that the French inhabitants were Indian sympathizers. Rebuilt in 1813 as Fort Clark (named for Revolutionary War commander George Rogers Clark, who passed through the area in 1778), Peoria soon gained a more solid foothold with Illinois's achievement of statehood in 1818 and the establishment of Peoria County in 1825, and grew rapidly in the 1830s and 1840s as settlers moved in and cleared land to farm the rich soil. Several foundries were formed in the 1840s, and Peoria became a center for the manufacture of agricultural equipment in the early 1840s, presaging Caterpillar's arrival nearly a century later.[1]

The Illinois River proved vital to the region's economic growth, assuring easy transportation to Chicago to the northeast and St. Louis to the Southwest. With the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, Peorians had access for their agricultural produce and industrial goods to large markets in the eastern half of the U.S. via the Great Loop of interconnected waterways. As a result, manufacturing became the area's primary source of revenue and employment from the Civil War through the post-World War Two era. In addition to numerous, primarily small agricultural implement manufacturers, Peoria was an important location for iron works, foundries, and later steel fabrication in the late nineteenth century, with Keystone Woven Wire and Fence (later Keystone Wire) establishing operations in Peoria in 1889. By the 1880s, it became an important railroad hub between Chicago, St. Louis, and the Quad Cities region of Illinois and Iowa.[2]

[1] *The History of Peoria County Illinois* (Chicago: Johnson and Company, 1880), 106; George W. May, *Students' History of Peoria County, Illinois* (Galesburg, IL: Wagoner Printing Company, 1968), 47-53, 63-64, 69-76.
[2] May, *Students' History of Peoria County*, 180-181.

Beginning in the late 1830s, the city developed as a center for brewing and distilling. By 1878, the city was home to fourteen distilleries, including Monarch which was, at this time, one of the largest distilleries in the world. By the 1930s, other nationally renowned producers of spirits established operations in Peoria. Armour established one of its largest meatpacking facilities there. Immediately after the repeal of Prohibition, Hiram Walker made the city its headquarters in 1933. Drawn to the abundance of water and grain in the region, and its proximity to river transportation for regional distribution, Hiram Walker constructed a large, $12 million waterfront distillery that at that time was the largest in the world. At its postwar peak, it employed over 1,700 workers. Enhancing Peoria's reputation as a center for alcohol production, Pabst opened one of its largest breweries in the city's waterfront district in 1934.[3]

Several groups of migrants were essential to the growth of Peoria as central Illinois's largest urban center between Chicago to the northeast, and St. Louis to the southwest. According to Daniel Elazar, German immigrant craftsmen and small businessmen were the "first true urbanites" in the Midwest, helping to establish Peoria as an important site for agriculture and industry. Its proximity to the Mississippi River brought a steady stream of Southerners into the area, while the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 funneled Mid-Atlantic settlers westward. Combined with European immigrants, they cultivated what Milton Derber dubbed a "rugged individualism" that shaped much of Peoria's later conservative politics and development. Especially after the Civil War, Irish immigrants helped to push Peoria County's population to over 88,000 by 1900, with 12,409 of them foreign-born, primarily of German and Irish descent.[4]

[3] City Planning and Zoning Commission, *Planning Peoria: A Master Plan Report* (Peoria, IL, 1969), 13; May, *Students' History of Peoria County*, 169.
[4] Daniel Elazar, *Cities of the Prairie: The Metropolitan Frontier and American Politics* (NY: Basic Books, 1970), 157-158, 172; Milton Derber, *Labor in Illinois: The Affluent Years, 1945-1980* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 293-294; May, *Students' History of Peoria County*, 102.

As Peoria's population and industries grew, so too did its cultural and social life which became renowned and notorious. Its place along major railroad lines brought opera performers and actors to its halls and theater houses. Theater and the rise of vaudeville in the late nineteenth century proved particularly important for the city and its reputation. A frequent stop for entertainers heading west on long show stints, Peoria became known as a stand-in for everyday people and, purportedly, representative of their tastes and preferences. Starting in the 1920s, and enhanced in popular parlance by entertainers such as Groucho Marx, the phrase "will it play in Peoria?" conveyed the notion that, if a vaudeville show, play, or consumer products did not appeal to Peorians, they would not appeal to the average American.[5] Yet there was a duality with which the phrase was used. While for some Peoria stood for "Every Town, USA," others used it as a less flattering depiction, both nationally and locally. For them, it was a "bland and boring backwater," a center of low-brow popular culture. Betty Friedan, author of *The Feminine Mystique*, recalled in a 1978 interview, "It used to embarrass me even to admit that I came from Peoria. It was a vaudeville joke, the epitome of a hick town."[6]

It may have been "hick town" to Freidan, whose background and experiences in Peoria discussed below certainly shaped her perceptions of her native city. Yet an examination of the city's social life and economic development do much to belie its image as "bland and boring." Indeed, Peoria had a long-standing reputation as a rowdy, anything-goes town, stemming from the rapid growth of its waterfront district. Home to brothels, bars, boozing, and brawling, the waterfront was well known as a rough and dangerous section of the city for nearly a century, beginning in the 1850s. Combined with the Washington Street section just east of downtown, also close to the Illinois River and which included most of the African American residents,

[5] Greg Wahl and Charles Bobbitt, *It Didn't Play in Peoria: Missed Chances of a Middle American Town* (Chicago, IL: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 10.
[6] Quoted in ibid., 108.

Peoria had two disreputable "red light" districts in and around downtown that, until the mid-twentieth century, were glaring centers of vice. Throughout the city, gambling was illegal yet out in the open, with many restaurants including the Main Street Steak 'N Shake lined with slot machines. In the early 1940s, as many as eighty brothels operated in the city. Many public officials at best looked the other way and, at worst, profited from organized crime syndicates that gladly paid fines, known as "vice fees" that were even published in area newspapers, in exchange for staying open. This included Ed "Boss" Woodruff who served as mayor for a total of twenty-four years, including in the raucous early 1940s and who, when prodded to uphold the law against gambling, reportedly complained, "What's next? Outlawing checkers?"[7]

A relatively small but stable African-American population resided in Peoria, comprising two to three percent of the city's population in the early twentieth century. (See Table 1.1) Stark, persistent racial lines have permeated Peoria and the region throughout most of its history, with African Americans experiencing discrimination and, at times, overt acts of racism at work and in local communities. Historians of Peoria's development have focused on the lack of racial strife and relatively harmonious relationship between its white and black residents. George W. May's 1968 *Students' History of Peoria County, Illinois*, asserts significant strides blacks have made and that "Peoria had no 'race problem'" even as he briefly discussed civil rights initiatives and protests to desegregate the city's housing, schools, and jobs in the private and public sectors.[8] In his more thorough analysis of the history of African Americans in Peoria, Bradley University sociologist Romeo Garrett nonetheless portrayed the arc of race relations in Peoria in similarly Whiggish fashion. While noting examples of racism in Peoria's pre-1945 history, Garrett accentuated the positive developments in Peoria, arguing that a combination of civil rights

[7] Ibid., 52-54.
[8] May, *Students' History of Peoria County*, 298.

protests and city government initiatives fostered the integration of neighborhoods and schools by the early 1960s, and created avenues to better jobs for black workers.[9]

It is worth pausing briefly to consider the particular contexts that informed the narratives of May and Garrett. Intended to be accessible to students and familiarize them with local history, May's work echoes the boosterish pronouncements of Peoria's political and business leaders, who consciously sought to improve the city's image in the 1950s and 1960s.[10] This was also before the onset of deindustrialization that soon thereafter occurred, with many industries still operating successfully and, subsequently, generating sufficient employment to keep unemployment rates low. Garrett's more balanced account of race relations rightly notes gains that African Americans made, and without the prevalence of violence that other, often larger urban centers experienced in the postwar period.[11] Yet both fail to explain why, after years of racial segregation, whites in and around Peoria would have accepted its gradual erosion by the 1960s. Nor do they speculate on the degree to which whites did. Also worth considering is the fact that Garrett, while exhibiting a keen eye toward the history of discrimination and improved postwar conditions that the area's African American community experienced, himself benefited from more liberal racial policies. In 1947, Garrett was one of the first three African Americans to receive a Master of Arts degree from Bradley University, which immediately hired him as its first African American faculty member that summer.[12]

[9] Romeo B. Garrett, *The Negro in Peoria* (Peoria, IL: Romeo B. Garrett, 1973), 95-124.
[10] See for examples Leo Adde, *Nine Cities: The Anatomy of Downtown Renewal* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 1969), 101-119.
[11] The literature on urban uprisings and racial conflict in the postwar period is vast. See for example Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Arnold Hirsch, *The Making of the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Guian A. McKee, *The Problem of Jobs: Liberalism, Race, and Deindustrialization in Philadelphia, 1945-1973* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
[12] Garrett, *Negro in Peoria*, 38.

A closer examination of black-white race relations in and around Peoria reveals not just a history of residential and occupational exclusion but also, on occasion, percolating racial tensions that help explain the enforcement, and therefore the *persistence*, of the region's racial boundaries. As chapter two will further discuss, nearly all blacks lived within the city and were confined to two small neighborhoods, with the larger of the two just northeast of the city's downtown.[13] Class as well as racial distinctions divided Peoria's neighborhoods from the Civil War through the 1960s. Historically, the southwest corner of the city, below downtown, was home to many white blue-collar workers. The North Side, stretching east of downtown and also known as The Valley, was where many Southern migrants settled and remained. Most middle and upper-class whites, especially prominent business people, resided in the north and west sections collectively termed "the Bluffs."[14]

The smaller towns in the surrounding rural communities of Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties, however, remained practically all white for decades. Pekin, a medium-sized city resting on the east side of the Illinois River south of Peoria, was all white and was, as James Loewen characterized it, a sundown town in which blacks were either by law or by custom excluded from residing. As late as 1970, Pekin had zero African American residents among its 31,375 residents, and was also a center of Ku Klux Klan activity in Illinois. The Klan owned the *Pekin Times* during the 1920s, and published Klan philosophy in editorials. According to Garrett, it was one of four Illinois cities that, as late as 1970, had a population over 10,000 but no black citizens. There had been one black person in Pekin in 1935, Walter Lee, who was arrested for the alleged theft of a car. His status as the lone African American in an all-white city was not lost on the *Peoria Journal*, whose headline noted his arrest with apparently intentional irony, "Entire

[13] Ibid., 80.
[14] Derber, *Labor in Illinois,* 294.

Negro Population of Pekin in Peoria Jail." After the charges were dropped, he did not return to Pekin.[15]

Peoria's early history reveals why Lee may have chosen to leave town. While Garrett found no lynchings that resulted in the murder of African Americans, he did uncover two "near" lynchings. One occurred in 1887 and involved a black man allegedly assaulting a young white woman. It was thwarted when Mayor S.A. Kinsey—who was apparently shot at—dispersed a mob brandishing a noose by ordering an officer to open a fire house on the mob. In 1903, when African American John McCrea killed Peoria detective William Murphy, a mob of 4,000 assembled at the city jail to demand that chief of police William Rhodes release McCrea to be lynched. Rhodes refused, and devised a ruse to deliver McCrea to the county jail by sending out two carriages—one toward the county jail, and another toward Pekin. Most of the mob followed the carriage to prevent its entry into Pekin, allowing the police to successfully deliver a "trembling" McCrea to the county jail. Whether or not it helped agitate for these "near lynchings," the Ku Klux Klan operated both clandestinely and openly in Peoria, with an office on the north side near one of the two black enclaves in the city, until the office was closed down after the state of Illinois revoked the Klan's charter in 1924. Derogatory portrayals of the black population abounded in the local press into the early twentieth century, buttressing the menace of violence against blacks with racist epithets that deepened the racial divide.[16] In words and the threat of violent deeds, whites in the Peoria area left no doubt about the subordinate status of blacks, or their willingness to enforce it.

[15] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Housing: 1970 Block Statistics Final Report HC(3) 71 Peoria, Ill. Urbanized Area*; James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: New Press, 2005), 60-61, 200, 300, 304; Garrett, *Negro in Peoria*, 77.
[16] Garrett, *Negro in Peoria*, 84-85. On the Klan in Peoria, see Garrett, 24.

Well into the postwar period, segregation was the norm for African Americans in Peoria. Housing segregation stemmed from a combination of steep income disparities between white and black Peorians, and formal and informal restrictions on the sale of homes to African Americans. The Civil Liberties Committee, a sub-committee of the Peoria Advisory Committee of the Illinois State Commission on urban conditions for blacks in Illinois, conducted an extensive survey of Peoria's African American community in 1940. Having distributed 500 surveys to the approximately 800 black families living in the city, the Advisory Committee found that blacks experienced the type of harsh, segregated living conditions and lack of occupational opportunities common to African Americans living in the South. About forty percent were unemployed in 1940, with "another thirty-two percent responding that they either worked part-time or held jobs through the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Ninety percent believed that they were denied employment or advancement based upon their race."[17]

Racial segregation was as much a fact of life for African Americans in the workplace as it was in public spaces. African Americans struggled to gain opportunities in both the public and private sectors in Peoria's economy. Civil Rights activist C.T. Vivian claimed that when he arrived in Peoria in 1947, he had little opportunity to apply his talent for journalism at area newspapers. "I had won an award at college in journalism as a sports editor," Vivian recounted. "I couldn't even apply at the *Journal Star*. It was understood."[18] Most blacks were even less fortunate than Vivian. A study by Bradley University's Sociology Department in 1947 indicated that roughly ninety percent of Peoria's blacks were employed in unskilled manual labor occupations such as janitors, domestics, porters, factory workers, garbage collectors, and

[17] Ibid., 93-94.
[18] Pam Adams, "Believing in the Fight: C.T. Vivian Reflects on Days in Central Illinois that Forged His Soul," *Peoria Journal-Star*, October 24, 1999, B1.

meatpacking.[19] The police department was one area in which blacks made minor advancements, with Peoria hiring a black police officer as early as 1887, and two black detectives in September 1925. These gains were circumscribed, for the detectives were relegated to duties strictly within the predominately African American sections of town which, until around 1970, remained either the south side near the riverfront, or on the north side.

The fire department, on the other hand, remained completely off limits for blacks until 1957, when the city appointed Edward Gains as the first African American firefighter. This was the result of decades of lobbying by black civic leaders, particularly pastors of predominately black churches. When the city proposed to build a new hook and ladder house on the west side in 1911, Dr. Jameson of the Ward Chapel A.M.E. Church urged the city to hire African American firefighters by touting the fearlessness of black firefighters around the country, contending that "the negro fire fighter forges his way to the very hottest and most dangerous points." The fulfillment of long-denied opportunities, as well as their heroism, further justified hiring blacks as fire fighters in Jameson's eyes, for he asserted that black workers were "entitled to something more than janitorships." Despite Jameson's appeals, the city refused to hire a black fire fighter for near a half-century, with some white citizens arguing against hiring blacks by proffering the stereotype of African-American laziness by contending that "the Negro would be to slow to reach a burning house." [Sic.][20]

Most restaurants in the downtown business district refused to serve African Americans until the late 1940s, as did all hotels. Movies theaters were also segregated, either refusing entrance to blacks outright or relegating them to rear or balcony seats. City swimming pools

[19] Garrett, *Negro in Peoria*, 48.
[20] Ibid., 45-47.

admitted blacks but one day per week, thus limiting recreational opportunities for blacks to the then-dilapidated Negro (later Carver) Community Center.[21]

In the absence of diverse racial groups, and the subordination of those who were present, white racism and exclusionary practices had a long shelf life. For much of its history, the Peoria area maintained particularly rigid racial boundaries in its public spaces and institutions, demarcating many of the best jobs in the public and private sector as white and male. Only later, in the postwar period, began to erode after years of activism. Even after African Americans moved into better housing in historically white neighborhoods and, as chapter 2 discusses, received more jobs in the public sector and at the region's largest employer in Caterpillar, Peoria was still a place whose people, in their quotidian lives and personal experiences, were attuned to strictly enforced racial boundaries.

"An Industry They Can be Proud of:" Caterpillar and Peoria's Economic Development

Although secondary to manufacturing in terms of the number of people employed and the revenue it generated, agriculture was central to both the region's economic growth, and to the development of what became Peoria's primary manufacturing industry—earthmoving equipment. Corn had been the area's main cash crop since the mid-nineteenth century, and by the 1920s soybeans became another vital agricultural staple. The success of the corn and soybean markets nationally and, later, internationally boosted the average value per farm throughout central Illinois in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. At the same time, the growth of the region's agricultural implements industry and improvements in the quality of farming equipment accelerated the mechanization of farming. Tractors with easily adjustable plows for row planting, and power lifts that made tractors more maneuverable, helped to make farm work

[21] Ibid., 94. For other examples of discrimination against author Betty Friedan and other members of Peoria's small Jewish community, as well as Asians, see Wahl and Bobbitt, *It Didn't Play in Peoria,* 109.

easier and faster. In addition to various small local manufacturers, International Harvester (IH) had large operations in Chicago and, later Rock Island Illinois, John Deere in Moline, Illinois near the Mississippi River, and J.I. Case in Racine, Wisconsin sixty miles north of Chicago producing machinery for flourishing Midwestern markets such as Peoria's.[22] The readily availability of better equipment brought significant increases in tractor ownership. In Illinois, the number of farms with tractors rose from 18 to 31 percent from 1925 to 1930, with ownership rates higher on more prosperous farms such as those in the Peoria area.[23] This also resulted in the expansion of both the size and the value of farms from 1880 to 1954, while the profitability of agriculture kept the number of farms in this period fairly stable, with the notable exception of the Depression years. The immediate postwar years saw a concentration in the number of farms as the process of mechanization proceeded, with the farm size and value increasing as the number of farms decreased. (See Table 1.2)

California-based Holt Manufacturing Company arrived in 1909 when it purchased the vacated Colean Manufacturing building in East Peoria, just across the Illinois River. Like other businesses, Holt was drawn to the region's proximity to waterways, and the vast agricultural market in the center of the nation. Local agricultural implements dealer Murray Baker, aware that Colean had closed, contacted Pliny Holt, the company's owner and invited him to tour the area and vacant facility. Impressed with the location, the city, and its potential for growth, Holt quickly purchased the building, ebulliently expressing his optimism in a letter to Baker. "I am sure that this…marks the beginning of one of the largest enterprises in the Middle West," Holt

[22] William R. Haycraft, *Yellow Steel: The Story of the Earthmoving Equipment Industry* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 2000), 37-40, 86-96.
[23] Daniel Nelson, *Farm and Factory: Workers in the Midwest, 1880-1990* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1995), 70.

proclaimed, "and assures the City of Peoria of an industry that they will be proud of in the future."[24]

Yet the company's first two decades of operations in the region were uneven ones, at best. World War I was a boon to the company's fortunes, steering government contracts to the fledgling company. Yet the end of the war brought a quick reversal of fortune for Holt, with sales plummeting from $23 million in 1918 to $8.9 million in 1921. Further complicating matters was the arrival in the tractor business of rival C.L. Best, whose Best Gas Tractor Company designed and produced superior tractors. Holt and Best eventually merged in 1925, forming Caterpillar Tractor Company in 1925.[25]

Like most businesses, Caterpillar struggled during the Great Depression, but rebounded and quickly ascended in the industry because of three key elements of Caterpillar's early operations. First, it manufactured tractors and construction equipment such as graders that gained a reputation for both high quality and durability. Also, few major competitors within the industry made the same products that Caterpillar did, with the largest companies such as IH, Deere, and Case making farming and harvesting equipment that Caterpillar eschewed. Lastly, in the 1930s Caterpillar became one of the leading manufacturers of diesel engines, which were heavier and, initially, costlier. However, diesel fuel burns more slowly and steadily than gasoline, allowing diesel engines to provide both greater torque, aided by the heavier diesel engine, and steadier performance than gasoline-fueled engines in low gears. The gas engine had a propensity for stalling in tough conditions that required operators to frequently shift loads and shift gears, while the diesel engine allowed operators to move earth or grade roads more smoothly and steadily. This revolutionized the industry by pushing out most gasoline-powered products, save for

[24] Ibid., 15; Gilbert C. Nolde ed., *All in a Day's Work: Seventy-Five Years of Caterpillar* (Hong Kong: Forbes Custom Publishing, 2000), 7-9, quote on 9.
[25] Haycraft, *Yellow Steel*, 63-64.

smaller ones, by the end of World War Two. For Caterpillar, manufacturing diesel engines had the ancillary benefit of greatly expanding the company's access to, and profitability from, the earthmoving and construction industries by selling diesel engines to companies making equipment Caterpillar did not, such as power shovels, rock crushers, and military equipment such as ships and tanks.[26]

Caterpillar's innovations in diesel engine technology powered the company's rise to the top of the industry. Company chairman Louis Neumiller reflected upon this innovation, "It was one of the wisest decisions we ever made. It may have even saved us from going under." With tractor sales lagging during the depths of the Great Depression—just $13.3 million in 1932, scarcely half its 1918 figures—diesel engine production helped to spike Caterpillar's sales over 500% by 1940, to $73.1 million. In addition to engine sales to other companies, government contracts even before World War Two bolstered the company's balance sheet, especially through New Deal-sponsored public works projects.[27]

Caterpillar's long-standing international orientation complemented its resurgence in the late 1930s, with its gaze fixed on controlling foreign markets to solidify its preeminent status among the world's earth-moving equipment manufacturing companies. Caterpillar quickly became competitive abroad by selling its products through its extensive worldwide network of privately-owned independent dealers—something that other companies in the industry lacked. This allowed Caterpillar to establish and expand overseas markets, increasing its foreign sales by twenty-five percent from 1939 to 1940.[28]

[26] Ibid., 63-66.
[27] City Planning and Zoning Commission, *Planning Peoria*, 16.
[28] Blankinship, "International Expansion of Firms," 23-26; Haycraft, *Yellow Steel*, 59-60; *1937 Annual Report*, Caterpillar Tractor Co., 7-8; *1940 Annual Report*, Caterpillar Tractor Co., 5, 7.

More than technological innovation and creative executive decision-making catapulted Caterpillar to the top of the earthmoving industry. The federal government's expanded role in funding and coordinating production during World War Two were essential to solidifying the company's reversal of financial fortunes. After the war, continued cohesion between the state and corporations, most notably the large companies that dominated key economic sectors, was decisive in maintaining corporate profitability through business overseas.

Caterpillar benefited greatly from the enormous expansion of contracts that the government awarded during World War Two. Relying heavily on the largest corporations to meet the unprecedented need for wartime production, the federal government awarded $175 billion in "prime" contracts, i.e., those between the army, navy, and other government procurement agencies, and their suppliers, between June 1940 and September 1944. According to the War Production Board, fully "two-thirds of this vast amount ($117 billion) went to the top 100 corporations," with fifty-one percent of the $175 billion going to the top thirty-three corporations alone. While automobile, steel, aircraft, electrical, and oil corporations comprised most of those top thirty-three corporations, International Harvester (ranked thirty-third in the top 100 corporations), Caterpillar (ranked forty-fourth), and Allis-Chalmers (forty-fifth) benefited handsomely from the wartime largess, with IH receiving $1.035 billion in prime contracts, Caterpillar reaping $602.7 million, and Allis-Chalmers taking in $585.7 million from 1940 to 1944.[29] Although Caterpillar produced tank engines and transmissions, as well as parts for ordnances, most of its armed forces contract work was devoted to tractors and other earthmovers crucial to paving airstrips, and clearing out forests and bombed-out areas. That is, although the

[29] John M. Blair, Harrison F. Houghton, and Matthew Rose, *Economic Concentration and World War II: Report of the Smaller War Plants Corporation to the Special Committee to Study Problems of American Small Business, United States Senate* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), 27-30; quote and definition of prime contracts on 27.

company produced myriad goods for the war effort, much of its production was in its staple items. Government contracts were the overwhelming sources of Caterpillar's sales, with the $602.7 million constituting 82.46% of the company's total sales revenues of $730.9 million from 1940 to 1944 [30]

The war served as a monumental boon for Caterpillar and the other business behemoths not only because of the billions in government contracts they procured, but also because of the government's massive commitment to financing both the conversion of existing facilities and the construction of new ones. Among the thirty largest producers of fabricated metal products (out of seventy total) during the war, excluding aircraft and shipbuilding, Caterpillar ranked nineteenth in the total usable value of its facilities in 1945, having received just over $50 million in public financing for its factories, the fourteenth-highest amount of government financing in this category and nearly four times the company's own wartime investment of $13 million. It used these subsidies to expand its East Peoria facility to over 500,000 square feet of floor space. With gross capital assets of just over $33 million in 1939, Caterpillar saw the value of its facilities nearly triple to over $96 million by the end of the war.[31]

The government's enormous investments in corporate America ensured a pervasive role for American businesses in the successful economic war effort, and at a considerable expense. Cost-plus contracts issued by the government covered the costs of researching, developing, and manufacturing war-related goods, and guaranteed profits above and beyond business expenditures. While these wartime contracts spurred investments in research, more than doubling the annual pre-war research investments that corporate America made, they drastically increased the share of taxpayer-paid investments while greatly reducing corporations' own share of

[30] Nolde, *All in a Day's Work*, 216-217. Caterpillar's sales revenues from 1940-1944 are from ibid., 276, Financial Summary table.
[31] Ibid., Table 40, 116.

research payments. Additionally, government investments aided manufacturers by funding the building of vocational schools and employee training that provided companies with sufficient numbers of qualified workers. Directly and indirectly, then, wartime spending and centralized economic and industrial planning were enormous benefits for America's wartime industries, particularly the largest firms which saw their competitive positions over smaller companies greatly enhanced. Conversely, many small and medium-sized companies realized declining fortunes during and after the war. With the vast majority of government contracts awarded to the largest firms, smaller competitors became dependent upon the larger ones for their existence by performing subcontracting work assigned by the giants. Although most frequently assigned to the largest companies, "prime" government contracts did not stipulate that they needed to perform all the work contracted, resulting in the larger firms farming out excess, sub-assembly, and sometimes less lucrative work to their smaller competitors. Caterpillar held onto and fulfilled its war contracts, while contracting out much of its far smaller production for civilian consumers to smaller companies. These wartime demands more than doubled the company's labor force in East Peoria to a high of 23,000.[32] Certain economic sectors suffered a serious attrition of small businesses during the war, with half a million such companies in the service, retail, and construction industries closing in this period.[33]

World War Two proved a watershed event in the convergence of government and corporate interests, with far-reaching implications for the emerging postwar economic order. It entrenched big business at the federal level, tying political and economic policy planning more closely together. After the war, government and business leaders coordinated re-conversion efforts to transition private companies previously involved in and benefiting mightily from

[32] Blair et al., *Economic Concentration and World War II*, 27; Haycraft, *Yellow Steel*, 102.
[33] George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 56-62. The figure of half a million small firms closing is on 61.

government military contracts back to producing goods for civilian consumption. However, there were two mounting concerns, shared by policy planners, businesses, and organized labor alike, about the shape that the postwar economic order would take. Reconversion and the time it may require elicited fears of high unemployment, declining civilian purchasing power even after wartime restrictions, and invoked the not-so-distant memories of Depression-era privation. The second problem was more market-oriented, with policymakers eager to ensure sufficient markets for American-made goods, since the U.S. owned roughly half the world's postwar industrial capacity. The economic revitalization of postwar Europe was instrumental for American business interests generally, and in this instance Caterpillar. Through the Marshall Plan, the U.S. helped to plan and fund European reconstruction through over $17 billion in subsidies, whose disbursement was carried out through the corporate-dominated Economic Cooperation Administration. In addition to ensuring the place of western European nations under America's coalescing Cold War aegis, postwar economics as implemented through the Marshall Plan offered funding for the purchase of U.S. goods that in the two years after the war, cash-starved and war-ravaged nations lacked.[34] Such policies provided a secure presence and revenue stream for corporations, primarily large, dominant firms. With the dire need for earthmoving equipment and spare parts to rebuild European nations, and its dealer network far more extensive than its industry rivals, Caterpillar was uniquely positioned to capitalize on the postwar demand. From 1954 to 1954, its sales increased over 56%, from $231 million to $407 million.[35]

While large firms already dominated key industries such as steel, automobiles, electrical products, and earthmoving and agricultural machinery, they became monopolies during and after the war, merging with or eliminating many smaller rivals. The earthmoving industry was

[34] Thomas J. McKormick, *America's Half-Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War and After* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2nd edition, 1995), 72-82.
[35] Nolde, *All in a Day's Work*, 220; *1949 Annual Report*, Caterpillar Tractor Co., 5; *1950 Annual Report*, 6-7.

emblematic of this larger trend in the American economy, with several large American firms commanding most of the world's sales by the mid-1960s through a combination of acquisitions and increased penetration of foreign markets. Large-scale projects both domestically and abroad sustained demand for earthmoving equipment, with the largest firms holding strategic advantages, such as manufacturing diversified product lines, efficient mass-production that reduced costs, and vast capital resources deployed in diverse markets, over their rivals.

During the postwar period, Caterpillar solidified its position in the industry by expanding its sales and production operations in the US and abroad. Domestically, it benefited handsomely from America's booming economy which funded numerous projects, such as interstate highways, urban expressways, airports, real estate development, and mining. Congressional approval for the Federal-Aid Highway Act that in effect created America's interstate highway system was almost as important for Caterpillar's fortunes as was World War Two. The company expanded its production capacity to keep pace with product demand by renovating and expanding its factories in East Peoria and San Leandro, California. Adding new factories in Joliet (1951), Decatur (1955) and Aurora (1958), Illinois, York, Pa. (1953), and Davenport, Iowa (1956) decentralized Caterpillar's operations that had been based in East Peoria.[36]

Equally important was its development of a global manufacturing base. Citing increased competition from other American companies such as Allis-Chalmers and International Harvester, which were developing their own global workforces, Caterpillar shifted some production in the 1950s to massive new factories abroad to be closer to foreign markets that it targeted and increasingly dominated. Its Newcastle, UK factory opened in 1950, making bulldozers and replacement parts, while factories in Sao Paolo, Brazil and Melbourne, Australia, opening in 1957, made road graders for South America and Asia, respectively. In 1960, forty-eight percent

[36] *1956 Annual Report*, Caterpillar Tractor Co., 12.

of the company's total sales were to customers overseas.[37] In order to further garner foreign market share, and to avoid tariff walls that many nations erected, the company expanded abroad through the 1960s. By 1966, Caterpillar operated wholly owned subsidiaries in eight countries in addition to joint ventures in Japan and India, keeping pace with rivals IH, Massey-Ferguson, Deere, and Allis-Chalmers in the relocation of factories abroad.[38]

Inscribing Paternalism: Community and Labor Relations in the Postwar Period

Caterpillar did not have a free hand with which to operate as it grew into a powerful, successful multinational corporation. Part of the wave of industrial unionism sweeping across America in the 1930s, Caterpillar for the first time in 1934 faced a concerted organizing drive that it opposed, though not quite as staunchly or as violently as Ford, the so-called Little Steel companies, and others.[39] After the National Industrial Recovery Act passed, Caterpillar willingly complied with the provisions the Administration established for the tractor sector, reducing the hours of its workday from forty-four to forty, and increasing wages by ten percent. However, these improvements did not stanch the sentiment for unionization among its factory workers.

As chapter 2 will discuss, the advent of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) brought a permanent place for industrial unionism at Caterpillar. In late 1936, disgruntled rank-and-file workers formed the Amalgamated Union that later merged with and was led by

---

[37] "Cat in a Hot New Field," *Fortune*, 57 (February 1956), 72; *1956 Annual Report*, Caterpillar Tractor Co., 9-10; "Caterpillar 1960 Profit, Sales Fell, but Foreign Sales Rose 26% to High," *Wall Street Journal*, January 23, 1961, 15.

[38] List of Foreign Subsidiaries, dated 10/3/1966, UAW International Affairs Department, Victor Reuther and Lewis Carliner Collection, Box 31, File 8, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan—hereafter UAW IAD, VR/LC, ALUA-WSU.

[39] For examples of violent clashes and employer resistance to the CIO, industrialism, and the rise of unionism in the 1930s, see Elizabeth Faue, *Community of Suffering and Struggle: Women, Men, and the Labor Movement in Minneapolis, 1915-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 69-78; Daniel Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 127-155; Art Preis, *Labor's Giant Step: Twenty Years of the CIO* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1964), 19-81; Irving Bernstein, *The Turbulent Years: A History of the American Worker, 1933-1941* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1970).

organizers in the CIO's Steelworkers Organizing Committee (SWOC). An organizing strike by the Amalgamated in 1937 led to a contract with Caterpillar, with the Amalgamated joining the left-wing Farm Equipment Workers in 1938. Caterpillar countered these efforts at unionization with a variety of methods that included company unionism and, in all likelihood, spying on its workers. According to former employee Walter Bristow, who helped to form the Amalgamated in 1936, Caterpillar was fully aware of the organizing efforts underway. After a few organizing meetings the Amalgamated held outside the plant, it met with a company official who, according to Bristow, hardly seemed surprised to learn of the Amalgamated. ""We went to a (Caterpillar) vice president's home and told him we were starting a union and he just smiled at us. He knew." Until this informal meeting with the company executive, the workers who formed the Amalgamated had only held unannounced meetings outside work, at such locations as a local school and the back room of an auto repair shop.[40]

Caterpillar also encouraged the formation of a nominally independent union, the Caterpillar Employees Alliance that unsuccessfully urged striking workers to return to work during the Amalgamated's 1937 organizing strike. In late July 1937, the Employees Alliance signed the same agreement for its smaller membership that the company had signed with the Amalgamated. Yet the Employees Alliance lasted only until early 1939, fading away in a demise of diminishing returns compared to the more active and successful FE.[41] Although Caterpillar did not openly tout the militant, violent anti-unionism that other companies did in the 1930s and 1940s, this scarcely meant that the company embraced the unionization of its employees. On the contrary, it only tolerated the existence of the various unions at its factories—FE in the late 1930s and 1940s and later the UAW and the International Association of Machinists at its Joliet

[40] Terry L. Towery, "UAW's Goals in Cat Strike Puzzle Pioneer," *Peoria Journal-Star*, March 22, 1992, A12.
[41] Murphy, *History of the Peoria Labor Movement*, 102-105.

plant— when faced with considerable union strength. When it sensed weakness, Caterpillar wielded its power boldly and creatively in the postwar years by developing innovative programs directed toward its employees and people in their factory towns to circumscribe the power and influence of unionism.

Led by the mercurial rise of the industrial unions in the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), unions gained numbers, political strength and finally, during World War Two, much-needed financial and organizational security. Maintenance-of-membership provisions, guaranteeing union membership for employees in unionized workplaces and employer-deducted union dues, established unions as a powerful counterweight to businesses that had, prior to the passage of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) in 1935 and protective measures from subsequent developments in labor law, treated unions with impunity and outright violence. Far from a perfect system, labor relations under the NLRA nonetheless empowered and protected collective union activity as never before.[42]

Bolstered by unionization rates that for private sector workers reached a postwar high of thirty-five percent in 1954, union leaders gained power and a place, if certainly a subordinate one to government and business leaders, at the table of wartime economic planning.[43] They pushed the Truman administration and Congress to enact a wide range of legislation, from full employment to national health insurance coverage that would have expanded the role of the federal government in the economy. Taking advantage of the pervasive presence they gained during the war in vital economic sectors such as steel, auto, electrical products, mining, and oil,

[42] See Nelson Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home: The CIO in World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 66, 78-79, 182-186 for the impact of maintenance-of-membership provisions.
[43] United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Handbook of Labor Statistics*, *Bulletin 1865* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), 389.

unions struck en masse in 1945 and 1946, shutting down whole industries for wage gains, shorter hours, and control over work rules.[44]

Fearful of labor's power and possible government incursions into what they perceived as their free market domain, business leaders fought back by organizing broad-based, well-orchestrated campaigns to influence American public opinion and policy. Led by business groups such as the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and the Chamber of Commerce, the corporate offensive sought to roll back organized labor on hotly contested battlegrounds of labor law. The first was to circumscribe the scope of collective bargaining to reserve for business the "right to manage." Most clearly highlighted in the UAW strike against General Motors, in which Walter Reuther insisted that the company "open its books" to prove that it could not afford to raise workers' wages thirty percent without raising prices, many postwar strikes concerned issues of corporate profits, the ability to afford wage increases, and access to financial records. Although National War Labor Board decisions granted management considerable latitude in "opening or closing new units, choice of personnel, [and] choice of merchandise to be sold," as well as initiating technological changes, the size of the workforce, and subcontracting, unions' challenge to those prerogatives enraged business executives. Companies fought tooth and nail in the postwar period to ensure that bargaining would be limited to what the National War Labor Board termed the "day-to-day life of the employees and their relations with their supervisors."[45]

Corporate interests also targeted reforms in the NLRA to reverse what it considered to be the law's exceedingly pro-union provisions and bias. Beginning in earnest in 1946, the NAM

[44] Preis, *Labor's Giant Step*, 257-283.
[45] James B. Atleson, "Wartime labor regulation, the industrial pluralists, and the law of collective bargaining," in Nelson Lichtenstein and Howell John Harris eds., *Industrial Democracy in America: The Ambiguous Promise* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 164-166, quotes on 164; Atleson, *Labor and the Wartime State: Labor Relations and Law During World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 223-224.

took to the newspapers and radio to advocate for changes that, after Republicans swept into power in that year's midterm elections, comprised the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947. These included guaranteeing employer free speech with employees, guaranteeing employees' "right to work" without maintenance-of-membership provisions (which eventually led states to enact right-to-work laws doing just this), verification that union leaders were not communists, bans against union financial contributions to political campaigns, the exclusion of foremen from union membership. Most of these and others, including a ban on secondary strikes and wildcat strikes, made their way into Taft-Hartley.[46]

Caterpillar dealt aggressively with FE, becoming one of the first companies to utilize the anti-communist provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act when it refused to bargain with or recognize the left-wing FE local 105, which represented workers at the company's largest factory in East Peoria. Capitalizing upon a climate of mounting national as well as local anti-communist hysteria, the company's aggressive stance toward FE precipitated the local's ouster from the East Peoria works and FE's eventual decline.[47] Caterpillar's bold anti-union stroke received strong support from local papers. An editorial in the *Peoria Journal* touted the "value and worth" of Taft-Hartley's anti-communist clause, while heaping encomia on the company. "Such victory over the forces of communism," the paper lauded, "would not have been possible without the courageous determination of Caterpillar."[48]

The community was staunchly conservative, consistently supporting the Republican Party for most of the twentieth century. Local papers, particularly *The Peoria Journal-Star*, frequently criticized Democratic politicians and policies, and endorsed Republicans for office. The

[46] Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism 1945-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 42-44; Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight*, 171-179.
[47] Derber, *Labor in Illinois*, 296; Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO: 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 280.
[48] "A Victory for the Taft-Hartley Law," editorial, *Peoria Journal*, June 4, 1948, 6.

Journal-Star was a staunch critic of President Roosevelt and New Deal economic policies, considering the latter an "invasion of private lives."[49] It connected Caterpillar with its anti-New Deal position, arguing that the company's innovations with the diesel engine did more to provide jobs and support the local community than the New Deal and higher tax rates, which it termed a "deterrent" for "business enterprise."[50] The city historically kept its tax rate low, with Peoria voters maintaining conservative anti-tax political positions, exemplified by their refusing to raise school taxes or support school bond issues in the 1950s.[51]

Peoria's stridently anti-communist strongly opposed Soviet expansionism in Eastern Europe after World War Two and the role of communists and socialists in the labor movement, especially among CIO unions. FE's ouster followed on the heels of an incident the previous year in which its anti-radical proclivities—and possibly Caterpillar's—and community' racial tensions dovetailed. Peoria gained national attention in April 1947 for refusing to allow the singer, actor, and activist Paul Robeson to play in Peoria. Initially slated to appear at Peoria's city hall before a local concert at the Shrine Mosque, Robeson came under fire after *Peoria Journal* columnist Jimmie Fidler criticized him for singing "Communist songs" at a concert in Los Angeles. Robeson compounded matters by dedicating one to Gerhardt Eisler, whom the paper termed "America's No. 1 communist," and who had recently been arrested and was awaiting trial. Under considerable pressure from the City Council and civic groups such as the American Legion—reportedly in concert with Caterpillar—to deny Robeson use of the hall, Mayor Carl O. Triebel at first defended Robeson's constitutional rights to free speech, then relented, denying the famous African American baritone. Despite word from his friend William Patterson that he had seen more guns in Peoria "than he ever had before," Robeson came to

[49] "Here in the Midwest," *Peoria Journal*, October 27, 1946, A6.
[50] "Diesel, Not New Deal, Did It," *Peoria Journal*, October 29, 1936, Sec. 1, 8.
[51] Adde, *Nine Cities*, 108.

Peoria and met a small group in the living room of Ajay Martin, an African-American officer of FE local 105.[52]

Although Caterpillar workers in East Peoria belonged to Local 105 of FE, and Martin had previously worked in that local, it does not appear that they either sponsored or supported Robeson's appearance. FE representative Mary Sweat wrote that although several FE locals had condemned Mayor Triebel's refusal to let Robeson appear, "the large Caterpillar Tractor Local 105 FE-CIO has yet to take action." One possible explanation was that, with Congress debating the anti-communist, anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act, Local 105 thought it best to stay out of the public eye regarding Robeson. Sweat also suggested, as did FE President Grant W. Oakes, that Caterpillar and other local businesses had prevented Robeson's appearance behind the scenes, for she reported being "refused time on the air" and being "unable to buy space in the newspapers" to advertise Robeson's would-be concert.[53] Even if local business had played no role in preventing Robeson's public appearance, the local press fomented enough animosity toward Robeson in its stories and editorials that buying ad space, at least in newspapers, would have been unlikely.[54] The next month, Oakes circulated a memo to all FE local unions apprising them of the Robeson incident and accusing the company of using it to foment employee animosity. Connecting the ban to a purported plan by Caterpillar to bust Local 105, Oakes

[52] "Mayor Denies City Hall Use for Robeson Meeting Tonight," *Peoria Journal*, April 18, 1947, 1, 5; Pam Adams, "Conspiracy or Curse?" *Peoria Journal-Star*, April 27, 1994, A4. For more about Eisler and the government's efforts to prosecute him, see Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are The Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 122-131. Thanks to Will Cooley for bringing this incident to my attention.
[53] Martin B. Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 317-320; 678-679 fn 5; Grant W. Oakes memo to All FE-CIO Local Unions, May 8, 1947, UAW President's Office Walter P. Reuther Collection, Box 93, File 12, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University—hereafter WP, ALUA-WSU.
[54] "The Robeson Appearance," editorial, *Peoria Journal*, April 18, 1947, 6; "Stand Up and Be Counted," editorial, *Peoria Star,* April 20, 1947, A6.

asserted that the company "began using the issue right in the shops to disrupt our locals, discredit the leadership, and pave the way for wage cutting…" [55]

It is also unlikely that Robeson's political views alone prompted such a vehement and potentially violent response from Peorians. For many, Robeson may have represented a threat because, as an outspoken African American championing equality as well as political radicalism, he threatened the local racial hierarchy in which segregation at work and in public proliferated. Even for people unfamiliar with Robeson or his political views, the color of his skin would hardly have eluded those who read the *Journal*, which continually referred to him as "Robeson, a Negro" as it bade the man it dubbed an "uncompromising foe of Christianity" "good riddance" from Peoria.[56] The demise of local 105 was a significant victory for local right-wing and anti-communist forces as well as for Caterpillar, for it meant the removal of Ajay Martin as a local union representative, thus depriving the Peoria area of one of its most prominent left-wing leaders and, as this chapter will later discuss, an outspoken local activist for civil rights. Emboldened by the successes against Robeson and the FE local, and abetted by avowed anti-communist columnist Gomer Bath of the *Peoria* Star, the American Legion in Peoria campaigned vigorously in 1950 against the Peoria library's purchase of several United Nations films they deemed "subversive," such as "Of Human Rights" supporting the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights."[57] Anti-communism played well in Peoria, linking newspaper, business, and community interests to what they deemed an essential patriotic cause.

Constructing Competitive Citizenship: Corporate Communication Programs

Direct communication with employees and local communities was essential to Caterpillar's approach to labor and community relations, and it worked diligently to persuade

[55] Oakes memo to All FE local Unions.
[56] "Why Keep It Alive?" editorial, *Peoria Journal*, November 22, 1947, 6.
[57] Gomer Bath, "The Libraries Buy Propaganda," *The Freeman* Volume 2, Number 17, May 19, 1952, 535-536.

people of the beneficial roles it played in their lives. It developed extensive networks to transmit the company's fundamental beliefs about the value of work, loyalty to the company, the role of business in their communities, labor relations, and political views. By the early 1950s, Caterpillar had established a company newspaper, *Caterpillar Folks*, for its East Peoria and Peoria-area factories, and did the same as it opened factories elsewhere. Roger T. Kelley, company vice president of personal and public affairs, conveyed Caterpillar's objective to be "employee identification with company goals…and of understanding and, whenever possible, agreement with those goals." Kelley believed this could be done "by communication that is factual, simply and honestly presented, and couched, wherever possible, in terms of reader benefit or interest."[58]

Cultivating connections between employees and Caterpillar's goals meant bypassing the union to address employees as individuals who, regardless of union membership, still held a distinct relationship that these publications portrayed as personal. Rather than strictly lambasting unions in acrimonious attacks, company papers spent far more time attuning employees to business developments in the US and around the world. Through them, Caterpillar and other businesses reinscribed a paternalistic approach toward their employees that harked back to the 1920s, when company welfare programs used to forestall unionization were the norm.[59] However, with the prevalence of private-sector unions in the postwar period, corporations such as Caterpillar adapted themselves to and acknowledged unions' more durable place at work and in society—even and especially if they did not desire their presence in their places of business.

---

[58] Machinery and Allied Products Institute and Council for Technological Advancement, *The Caterpillar Approach to Industrial Relations* (Machinery and Allied Products Institute, 1966), 57.

[59] For a good assessment of company welfare policies in the 1920s, albeit one that may grant them too much success in securing workers' loyalties, see David Brody, *Workers in Industrial America: Essays on the 20th Century Struggle* 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 48-81.For a different interpretation on the effectiveness of corporate welfare strategies on industrial workers in 1920s Chicago, see Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Company CEO William Blackie reflected this revised philosophy toward unions and employees, saying "Where employees have elected to have union representation, the people in those unions are nonetheless *our* people. Just because they were given the opportunity to organize in a collective unit—and chose to do so—they are no less a part of *us*."[60] The quote reflects an important development in the business propaganda of "practical conservatives": the company admitted an awareness of the new power unions held by avoiding anti-union sentiment, and acknowledging that one can be a *union* employee, while yoking that dual identity back within a larger, paternalistic framework that began with the employer-employee relationship.[61]

Reminders about job performance and efficiency connected employees to Caterpillar's quest for competitiveness. It frequently extolled the virtues of competition as the engine driving the company's improvements in productivity, efficiency, cost-containment, and product quality. In its imagery and advertisements, Caterpillar emphasized competitiveness not just as a business value, but an individual and national one as well. Pride and efficiency in a job well done connected the employee—as an individual—to the business's vitality. Maintaining low production costs and high product quality were obligations "right in the hands of Caterpillar people" that required "**personal** attention" and "**personal** concern." Attention to these details would improve company competitiveness, increase "man-hours of work for Caterpillar people," and provide customers with the "best possible value in the machines they buy."[62] That "**personal**" appeared as such reinforced Caterpillar's effort to circumvent its factory employees' identification with the union, and bond them to business-oriented goals.

---

[60] *Caterpillar Approach*, 17-18, emphasis in the original.

[61] The term comes from Howell John Harris, *The Right to Manage: Industrial Relations Policies of American Business in the 1940s* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982). For similar paternalistic sentiments from other business executives, including one from International Harvester Vice President Ivan Willis, see Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise*, 80.

[62] "Competition: Spur to Growth," *Caterpillar Folks*, Peoria, IL., August 26, 1960, Vol. XI, No. 9, 5; December 23, 1960, Vol. XI, No. 17, 2, Agricultural Implements Department, Series 4, Box 2, File 1, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University—hereafter Ag-Imp, ALUA-WSU; emphasis in the original.

During contract negotiations and strikes, it was not unusual for the company to mail letters to employees apprising them of the company's position on crucial subjects, and on occasion to gather workers for speeches by corporate executives. Company communications also served as organs to criticize unions generally and the UAW specifically over wasteful practices such as featherbedding, and the use of individuals' union dues for political lobbying.[63] Factory newspapers promoted the benefits of free enterprise, free trade, and modernization for communities in the US and around the world.[64] Company papers connected free trade and corporate profits with the well-being of workers and their families, featuring cheerful employees both at work and in comfortable homes with their families, enjoying modern amenities such as new household appliances. These features almost always focused on white male workers, who comprised the vast majority of the region's and Caterpillar's workforce. They reinforced the image of the white male breadwinner by showing men toiling at work and relaxing at home, while women toiled at home to accommodate the relaxation of Caterpillar workers. These profiles were thus cultural products that reaffirmed a form of masculine economic nationalism, by connecting physical male-dominated work and its benefits to a decent way of life and, just as importantly, the success of corporate America.

Culture and leisure served as important sites to reinforce company identification. Caterpillar utilized its employees to cultivate name-brand loyalty, and deepen cultural connections with its workers. It encouraged employees to paste Cat bumper stickers on their vehicles and their luggage to spread the company's name around the country, and to allow

[63] "Featherbedding—Who Gets Hurt?" May 6, 1960, Vol. XI No. 3, 2; "Who Speaks for You?" August 12, 1960, Vol. XI, No. 8, 2, *Caterpillar Folks*, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 2, File 1, ALUA-WSU.
[64] See "Basic Projects Will Help Ensure…a Brighter Future for Swaziland," *Caterpillar News and Views,"* October-November 1964, 10-13; "With Modern Machinery…Navajos Develop Their Reservation," *Caterpillar News and Views*, October-November 1963, 16-18, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 2, File 2, ALUA-WSU, for two of many examples.

workers from different locations to identify each other. This fostered a sense of pride and identification with Caterpillar as an alternative to their identity as union members.[65]

The company sponsored numerous sports and recreational programs, strengthening the ties between employees and the company. While these gained in popularity in the postwar period, Caterpillar developed sports programs early in its history "as an element of Caterpillar culture," with its predecessor Holt sponsoring basketball and Saturday baseball teams by 1915. Until 1961, the firm maintained a very competitive team in the National Industrial Basketball League (NIBL), competing against teams from Goodyear, Philips 66 and other corporate sponsors. In well-attended games in the Peoria Civic Center and Bradley University, the NIBL team drew some of the nation's top talent, often players who worked summer stints at its factories, including five members of the 1952 men's Olympic squad that won the gold medal in Helsinki. Workers had opportunities to bowl, golf, and play basketball against their co-workers in organized leagues with results published in the company papers. The Caterpillar Employees' Bowling Association attracted nearly 1,000 bowlers in 1959, according to its Peoria-area factory newspaper *Caterpillar Folks.*[66] These company-sponsored recreational activities tended to be gender-stratified, with separate women's and men's bowling and golf leagues, with softball offered in both co-ed and gender-specific leagues.[67] Corporate-sponsored recreation became a means by which companies such as Caterpillar could connect with their employees away from the workplace. Sports, which became more popular spectator activities in the 1950s through radio and television, offered workers opportunities to socialize with people they often only saw

[65] Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise*, 93.
[66] Nolde, *All in a Day's* Work, 224-226. *Caterpillar Folks* frequently reported on the various proceedings of the NIBL, as well as its plant leagues. Basketball teams in the plant leagues were often organized by department, with names such as the Finance Wizards, Parts Shipping, Morton Bombers, Tool Design Heroes, and Photocopy Phizzles. See for example *Caterpillar Folks*, December 30, 1958, Vol. IX, No. 16, 4, Ag-Imp, ALUA-WSU.
[67] Nolde, *All in a Day's Work*, 226-227.

in the factory. Additionally, employer-sponsored leisure provided the chance to alleviate the difficulties and drudgery of mass-production work that often fostered a range of negative emotions such as alienation and frustration—which might otherwise be channeled into workplace conflict and strike activity—that businesses strove to avoid.[68]

Community relations were no less important to Cat than employee relations. In connection with the Chamber of Commerce, company recruited managers to "develop informed, articulate spokesmen," organize discussion groups, and meet with people in local communities to discuss economic and political issues. The Chamber of Commerce worked with several hundred firms to hone their communications skills to more effectively persuade the American public of the benefits of free enterprise. Caterpillar played an important role in these efforts, with Fred Jolly, Cat's community relations manager, sitting on the Chamber's Business Relations Committee.[69] It circulated company papers throughout factory towns to spread the gospel of free enterprise, mailing them to churches, small businesses, and local clubs. Seeing local barber shops as important centers of political and social discussion, Caterpillar started inviting Peoria barbers in 1950 for factory tours to help them "talk factually about the company and its policies."[70]

Company executives stressed several related themes throughout the 1960s. The company adroitly cast its expansion in terms that minimized potential threats to local jobs by emphasizing the benefits that its success would provide for individual workers, the communities in which they lived and worked, their nation, and consumers around the world. It consistently connected company profitability and competitiveness with increased industrial productivity, personal prosperity and job security, national and international progress, and the fulfillment of America's

[68] Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise*, 91-93.
[69] "Economic Discussion," *Stet*, November 1957, No. 206, 1-4.
[70] Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise*, 91-93.

role as leader of the free world during the Cold War. By proffering a discourse that de-emphasized its appetites for greater profits and worldwide market share, and instead accentuated localism, nationalism, anticommunism, and progress, Caterpillar cast its increasingly internationalist orientation, indeed its raison d'etre, all at once as wholly American, local and munificent.

Company president Eberhard and executive vice-president William Blackie justified relocating production to its shareholders by emphasizing the "*increasingly industrialized and competitive"* world in which it competed for business. Eberhard and Blackie framed the firm's growing international production base as an appeal for parity with foreign manufacturers who had previously enjoyed conditions that the company, without access to the same labor markets, considered "unfair." They claimed that foreign companies utilized "advantages arising from the greater costs of transportation and duty applicable to U.S.-built product in a number of important markets, and also from the manufacturing cost advantage derived from lower foreign wage levels." The conclusion for Eberhard and Blackie was inevitable: "Caterpillar and many other American companies must *undertake production in foreign markets* if they are to have the same cost advantages available to competitors abroad."[71]

Yet as its production base grew well beyond America's national boundaries, the company repeatedly reminded its workers that it remained headquartered in and committed to Peoria, Illinois. Eberhard told a meeting of the Peoria Rotarians, "We believe in Peoria as a good place for our largest plant and the base of our operations. We have always believed this…Because of our long and successful association with Peoria, we have come to regard this community and our

[71] Harmon S. Eberhard and William Blackie, "Letter to the Shareholders," January 18, 1963, Caterpillar Tractor Co., *1961 Annual Report*, 2-3; all emphasis is in the original.

Company as 'Partners in Progress.' We want the city to remain a good place to call our home."[72] It fostered a sense of civic duty by donating company equipment to assist Peoria in clean-up drives, and the Post Office with transporting Christmas presents. When heavy rains caused the Illinois River to crest seventeen feet above normal in late May, 1943, the company donated over 250 pieces of equipment to build and repair levees, while thousands of employees filled sandbags and operated equipment in Peoria's flood-ravaged downtown. In annual parades to commemorate Memorial Day and July 4th, which served as performative exercises reinforcing national identity through mass participation and reverential treatment of symbols such as the American flag, Caterpillar employees parading with company equipment further connected the company with the community.[73]

Additionally, it argued that its foreign operations abetted domestic production and employment. In a speech to the Peoria Cosmopolitan Club, Eberhard rationalized Caterpillar's recent expansion into overseas production, stating that "…foreign production does not necessarily displace U.S. manufacturing of machines in the U.S. plants…We know that our overseas operations have provided more jobs in Peoria rather than taken jobs away."[74] Both foreign sales and foreign jobs, he insisted, were good for American workers.

In Peoria, this particular point may have resonated as deeply as any, for the community grew heavily reliant on Caterpillar for employment, which sustained other sectors such as retail

[72] "In Rotary Address—Eberhard Expresses Cat's Faith in Peoria," *Caterpillar Folks*, Peoria, IL., January 27, 1961, Vol. XI, No. 19, 3, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 2, File 1, ALUA-WSU.
[73] Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise*, 177, 183 fn 68, 171-172, 93, 106 fn 118; Nolde, *All in a Day's Work*, 218-219; Lyn Spillman, *Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 6-9.
[74] Harmon S. Eberhard, Caterpillar President, "Exports Create Jobs in U.S.," Speech to the Peoria Cosmopolitan Club, Peoria, Illinois, March 23, 1961, cited in David N. Bateman, "Institutional Business Communications, Specifically Communications of Caterpillar Tractor Company in Support of Holding the Line on Wages, 1960-1961" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1970), 110-111; "Opportunity," Film prepared for Caterpillar Tractor Company and shown to Peoria-Area Employees, August-September 1961, cited in Bateman, "Institutional Business Communications," Appendix F, 258; Profits Create Jobs," *Tracks and Treads*," Aurora, IL., September 1964, Vol. 5, No. 12, 4; December 1966, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 1, *Tracks and Treads*: Caterpillar Tractor Company, 1959-1967 file, ALUA-WSU.

and service. From 1960 to 1967, Caterpillar provided more than half the area's manufacturing jobs, even as other local industries such as Hiram Walker, Pabst, and lift manufacturer Wabco were profitable and important local businesses. While government grew into one of the most important sources of employment, it lagged far behind manufacturing throughout the 1960s, while the number of agricultural workers in the Peoria area dropped from 6,475 in 1960 (5.3% of the area's total employment) to just 4,500 in 1968 (3.1 % of total employment).[75]

Caterpillar emphasized the benefits that local communities, America and the world received from its products and profitability. Small businesses, the company's "biggest market," performed services with products such as mining, waste disposal, paving, and flood control that improved the quality of life for Illinois residents.[76] Its annual reports and company papers served not only as informational status reports on the financial condition of the corporation, but also as advertisements proclaiming the necessity of for its equipment to worldwide construction of roads, dams, bridges, homes, towns, mines, canals, and energy projects.[77] In their 1956 letter to its shareholders, company executives Louis Neumiller and Harmon Eberhard declared that around the world, "there is today a huge reservoir of work to be done for which Caterpillar equipment is particularly well suited."[78]

---

[75] City Planning Commission, *Planning Peoria*, 64 Table 34 for total manufacturing, 87 Table 55 for government employment, 99 Table 62 for agricultural employment.

[76] "The BIG Little Man," *Caterpillar News and Views,* October-November 1958, 7-9; "Flood Control Demands Legwork in the Watershed," *Caterpillar News and Views,* October-November 1959, 2-6; "John Vanderveld…Modern Garbage Man," *Caterpillar News and Views,* June-July 1960, 14; "It's a Good Life the Pipers Live," *Caterpillar News and Views*," August-September 1961, 2-7; "Jack Grider is a Working Man," *Caterpillar News and Views*, August-September 1963, 6-9, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 2, File 2, ALUA-WSU.

[77] "Caterpillar Equipment Helps Settle Bolivian Families," *Tracks and Treads*," Aurora, IL., April 1967, Vol. 8, No. 5, 4, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 1, *Tracks and Treads*: Caterpillar Tractor Company, 1959-1967 file, ALUA-WSU; "Basic Projects Will Help Ensure…a Brighter Future for Swaziland," *Caterpillar News and Views,"* October-November 1964, 10-13; "With Modern Machinery…Navajos Develop Their Reservation," *Caterpillar News and Views*, October-November 1963, 16-18, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 2, File 2, ALUA-WSU.

[78] Louis B. Neumiller and Harmon S. Eberhard, "Letter to the Shareholders," January 19, 1956, *1956 Annual Report*, Caterpillar Tractor Co., 5; "Caterpillar People" and "New Road for Ghana," *Caterpillar News and Views*, Christmas 1959, 20-22, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 2, File 2, ALUA-WSU.

Glossy photographs and rough sketches accompanied hortatory passages that characterized resource development with its goods, and the subsequent profits from their sale, as more than good for business, more than good for world development, but as a fulfillment of Americans' spirit and ideals. Advertisements and articles blended images of modern technology and society with agrarian, pre-industrial themes to portray Caterpillar as plowing an ongoing path toward progress at home and abroad. Harking back to American pioneers who heeded the call to discover "the North American continent…its mighty potentials ready to be harnessed to haul in a prosperous future," John Wardale proclaimed in *Tracks and Treads* that 'we in the earthmoving industry…as individuals and collectively, are making our contribution to the American heritage. Earthmoving is basic—it is the one standard requirement. We have to turn soil to cultivate, move earth to make way for a road or clear a site for the foundations of homes, factories and offices."[79] These espoused labor with Caterpillar machinery as embracing "our heritage…from which man, in our time, has fashioned a better life. It is a world in which the spirit of freedom has grown, has sometimes ebbed, but has never died as men fought to preserve it for posterity. And thus it is for succeeding generations to assume responsibility for maintaining and developing this, their birthright."[80] This, Caterpillar publicized, was America's greatest gift…its REAL wealth and power…the American concept of freedom [and] liberty."[81]

When framed as a national value, competition was both economic and social, pitting it and its workers against communist countries on the opposing side of the Cold War as well as other corporations in the "free world." During the 1960s in particular, Caterpillar publicized the

[79] John Wardale, "Our Heritage," *Tracks and Treads*," Aurora, IL., November 1966, Vol. 7, No. 12, 3, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 1, *Tracks and Treads*: Caterpillar Tractor Company, 1959-1967 file, ALUA-WSU.
[80] "This is our heritage…" *1960 Annual Report*, Caterpillar Tractor Co., 2. This particular passage appeared next to a reprint of Peter Helck's 1944 painting "This is My Birthright." According to the caption in the annual report, Helck was "commissioned originally by the Company to illustrate an advertisement in *The Saturday Evening Post* supporting the sale of U.S. Government bonds during World War II."
[81] "What Is America's Greatest Gift?" *Caterpillar News and Views*, Peoria, Il., Christmas 1959, 3, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 2, File 1, ALUA-WSU.

importance of competition on these two fronts interchangeably, emphasizing the economic and ideological superiority of capitalist, free-market nations against communist nations such as the Soviet Union on the one hand, and on the other the responsibility of workers to be loyal, productive and efficient on the job when competing against other corporations. In the process, it sought to instill in its workers a dual concept of competitiveness that was at once proudly patriotic—good for the country—and pro-business—good for the company and its employees.

The Soviet Union bore the primary brunt of this anti-communist propaganda. In a three-article series in 1959, the company simultaneously derided the inferior business practices of Soviet state-run industry and fretted about the possibility that the Soviet Union's scientific prowess might increase its industrial capacity enough to eventually overtake the U.S. The articles proffered a fundamental contradiction by at once contending Soviet industrial and societal inferiority, while fretting about Soviet industry as if they posed an imminent threat to American industrial might[82] After an extensive tour of Soviet factories in 1961, products division manager Bob Morrill was unimpressed by the state of its heavy-equipment industry, which Morrill termed "10 to 20 years behind the United States." Morrill concluded that "first, little work is actually underway, and second…they are far behind in the construction equipment field, and not anxious to display this fact."[83] Caterpillar claimed that the Soviet system had more than merely inferior industrial techniques, but contained deeper, ideological problems. Rather than providing opportunities for its citizens to excel, Russia—which its publications used interchangeably with "Soviet Union"—encouraged equality rather than excellence, stifling people's innate competitive desire. This was more than unfair to its citizens; it was in fact "foreign to the nature of man. Far

[82] "Our Red Rivals…" *Caterpillar News and Views*, June-July, August-September, and October-November 1959, 2-5, 14-17, and 8-11 respectively, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 2, File 2, ALUA-WSU.
[83] "Nothing Up To U.S. Standards in Soviet Factory," *Caterpillar Folks*, Peoria, IL., October 20, 1961, Vol. XII, No. 14, 1-2, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 2, File 1, ALUA-WSU.

from wanting to be equal, man wants to excel—and will try to excel as long as there is a reward for doing so."[84] Thus, competitiveness was a core component of economic vitality as well as social progress because it provided the impetus for achievement, a cornerstone of the American way of life.

Successful Cold War competition, for a dominant international manufacturer such as Caterpillar, required lower tariffs for imports and exports alike. Caterpillar consistently argued for expanded trade and lower tariffs as a means to garner greater access to established markets in Europe and Japan and, by the 1960s, the burgeoning industrializing regions such as the Middle East, South America, and Southeast Asia. Its representatives frequently appeared before Congress to speak on behalf of bills and trade agreements that eased tariffs on American imports and exports alike. In his testimony before the Senate Finance Committee in 1958, company vice president William Blackie championed "freer international trade" by linking his company's business strategies to national objectives, submerging the former to the latter with patriotic appeals. Framing his arguments for the company's expansion into foreign markets not merely as essential to its vitality, but particularly to the nation's economic health, and to national security particularly regarding the Soviet Union, Blackie asserted that it was not "sufficient to appraise [international trade]…only in the narrow context of the well-being of one company...The major consideration must be the welfare and security of the United States as a whole." In 1957, roughly forty-two percent of Caterpillar's sales were outside the U.S., a nine percent increase from the previous year. Connecting exports to domestic jobs and the health of its "plant communities," Blackie argued that, had its foreign sales not risen during the economic

[84] "Marx—Jobs—and Money," *Tracks and Treads,"* Aurora, IL., February 1960, Vol. 1, No. 9, 2; Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 1, *Tracks and Treads*: Caterpillar Tractor Company, 1959-1967 file, ALUA-WSU.

slump of the late 1950s, the company "would have been obliged to lay off about 4,000" employees.[85]

Invoking the specter of communism, particularly in light of the Soviet Union's successful launch of the Sputnik satellite, Blackie portrayed low tariffs and American leadership in international trade as bulwarks against aggressive Soviet expansion that was equal parts economic and militaristic. American access to world markets and, in turn, the ability of developing nations to sell to the U.S., would dissuade "less-developing countries" from viewing the Soviet Union as a preferable alternative for their "wanted goods." Trade was a strategic Cold War front on which American trade policy, and American businesses such as Caterpillar, must join forces to thwart the "declared and mounting Soviet offensive to beat us, not with intercontinental missiles but with intercontinental trade."[86]

With one eye on its communist competitors, Caterpillar kept its other firmly fixed on growing challenges in the 1960s from foreign corporations. The company anticipated threats to its worldwide market share that competitors such as Komatsu would pose by the end of the 1970s, insisting that improvements in competitors' quality and increasingly cost-effective production demanded that the company "offer better values in order to stay competitive." Company publications framed this discourse in terms that conflated the company with the nation, thus conveying the threat that foreign companies posed not only to the company, but also to the nation. *Tracks and Treads* stated, "More and more highly competitive overseas manufacturers are challenging America's traditional quality leadership."[87] In consecutive issues of *Caterpillar*

[85] William Blackie, "Testimony on Behalf of Caterpillar Tractor Co. to the Finance Committee of the United States Senate on the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Program," *Hearings Before the Committee on Finance, United States Senate, 85th Congress, 2nd Session, on H.R. 12591*, June 24, 1958 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1958), 494.
[86] Ibid., 495-496.
[87] "Made in Japan," *Tracks and Treads*, Aurora, IL., December 1966, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 1, *Tracks and Treads:* Caterpillar Tractor Company file, ALUA-WSU.

News and Views, the company published product, price, and hauling capacity comparisons between its products and those of its rivals. While touting the superior quality of its products, Caterpillar stressed the difficulty that the company's products faced on the world market when pitted against cheaper, foreign-made goods. Company and employees alike needed to keep costs atop their lists of priorities in order to maintain corporate competitiveness and employees' jobs.[88]

It seems that Caterpillar's publicity efforts had some of the desired effect and influenced employees and area residents. The company claimed that, through interviews and questionnaires it circulated at its 1965 annual meeting asking workers about the sources from which they preferred to get information about Caterpillar, other than employee meetings (35% of respondents), workers chose the company-wide magazine *Caterpillar World* (26%) and plant newspapers (19%) more often than supervisors (12%), local newspapers or the union newsletter (4% each). One ought to treat these findings with some skepticism, for the annual meetings themselves, open to all employees, were also designed to inculcate a pro-business mindset. Nor was there reference to how opinion survey questions were presented to what the company claimed were randomly chosen employees, nor a sense of how many unionized factory workers vis-à-vis supervisors and nonunion office staff attended. On the other hand, company publications were directly mailed to all employees. While many may have blithely discarded them, home delivery also meant they could be read in one's spare time away from the bustle of the workplace and from co-workers and, as the company intended, read by family members. Additionally, the company's annual "Power Parade" displaying product performance in action for employees, their families, and the Peoria community drew well over 50,000 in one weekend

[88] "Everywhere We Turn There's…Wheel Loader Competition," *Caterpillar News and Views*, June-July 1963, 7-9; "It's Growing Rapidly…Motor Grader Competition Abroad," *Caterpillar News and Views*, October-November 1963, 13-18, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 2, File 2, ALUA-WSU.

in 1964.[89] The role that consistently positive media coverage played in shaping public opinion is worth considering. The conservative, pro-business *Peoria Journal-Star* became the area's primary newspaper by the 1960s, and generally avoided directly criticizing the company, including during strikes in this period. It too reached the majority of area residents, including people well outside Peoria. Survey data gleaned by American Newspaper Markets Inc. indicated that "97% of Peoria county households subscribed to the *Journal-Star*," with the four counties immediately surrounding Peoria County having subscription rates between 53 and 59% of households.[90] While it is always difficult to gauge how the general public receives information, the fact that the general public and Caterpillar employees consistently received and purchased information that cast it and its business practices in a positive light is well worth noting.

A Brighter Future? Urban Improvement and Civil Rights in Peoria

Strong economic performance, the emergence of a local civil rights movement that broke down barriers in employment, residential, and consumer segregation, and changes in local government structure signaled important changes in daily life in 1960s Peoria. This heightened a sense of optimism among civic leaders that the city was shedding its negative reputation as a "hick town" that was a backwater to some, lacked inclusiveness for others, and was seen by most as led by corrupt and indifferent public officials. Changing these brought to Peoria, according to a local banker, "a new atmosphere in this town, a whole new psychology."[91]

Backed by Caterpillar executives and other local business leaders, Peoria altered its government structure. With corporate executives pushing openly for a more efficient city government, a referendum passed in 1952 that ushered in a city manager who no longer belonged to the legislative council. The referendum also eliminated the long-standing system of ward –

[89] *Caterpillar Approach to Industrial Relations*, 58-60, 65.
[90] City Planning Commission, *Planning Peoria*, 75, Figure 9.
[91] Adde, *Nine Cities*, 117.

based elections that were perceived as corrupt and maintaining unresponsive officials, and replaced it with city-wide elections for council members. The council and city manager acted to make equal a tax code that taxed some business higher, and some considerably lower, than their rates out to have been. They also successfully pushed for new school bonds to build new schools and updated deteriorating ones.[92]

Civil rights activism beginning in the late 1940s slowly but steadily broke down many racial barriers in Peoria, beginning with successful efforts to desegregate downtown restaurants. The Revered C.T. Vivian, who gained notoriety during the civil rights movement in the South as a founding member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and with his participation in key struggles such as the 1961 Freedom Rides and the voter registration drive in Selma, Alabama in 1965, was a central figure in the Peoria civil rights movement in the late 1940s. After attending Western Illinois University and moving to Peoria to work at the Carver Community Center, the twenty-three year-old Vivian recalled how deeply segregation permeated Peoria. "There was only one place in downtown Peoria . . . that you could eat. That was Thompson's Restaurant. We had to sit in the back."[93] He became involved with a group of white civil-rights activists influenced by the Chicago-based Committee (later Congress) of Racial Equality (CORE), and based in churches around Bradley University on the city's west side. While a group of about 20 non-violent activists including Vivian picketed in front of and demanded service in various downtown eateries, they focused their attention especially on Bishop's Cafeteria, a popular and affordable shop on Main Street. In a 1999 interview, Vivian

[92] Ibid., 107-109.
[93] Adams, "Believing in the Fight," *Peoria Journal-Star*, October 24, 1999, B1. For more on Vivian's involvement in myriad civil-rights efforts, especially in the South, see David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (NY: Vintage, 1988), 291-294, 358-371, 438-447.

recalled the combination of persistence and moral suasion within nonviolence that became a trademark of the civil rights movement:

> We'd wait in line and they'd try to move people ahead of us. We'd say we were next. Well, often times, they'd move people past you anyway, but generally they'd have to seat us just to get us out of the way. But we did not mind because that raised the issue in the minds of everyone else. They have to decide, is this what I'm like? Am I a person that denies other people a chance just to sit down and eat? Am I a person who wants people to go to war and fight and die for a democratic country and then deny them democracy?

After several months of picketing outside and sit-in style actions inside Bishop's, Vivian and his fellow activists successfully brokered a deal with Bishop's that guaranteed equal access and service for African Americans. This led to similar settlements with other restaurants that saw the desegregation of about two-thirds of Peoria's eateries by 1955, according to a survey performed by Bradley University's Sociology Department.[94]

Grassroots efforts to desegregate schools led to an increase of African Americans at Peoria High School. For decades, most black high school students attended Peoria Manual, near one of the city's black neighborhoods, while Peoria High, the city's best high school, was nearly all white. Geraldine Mitchell, who was later chairperson of the Peoria Housing Authority, wanted her children to attend Peoria High, which was also close to their home. One of her youngest daughters, Gloria Oliver, recalled in a 1996 interview, "What my mom did was integrate that school herself," said Oliver. "She marched us up there and enrolled us. I think they were just in shock at her audacity. After that, many other people followed."[95]

Through meetings with business officials and public actions such as picketing and sit-ins, African Americans began to move into occupations from which they had been excluded. By the early 1970s, blacks made inroads into office, sales, and managerial positions in retail and

[94] Ibid; Garrett, *Negro in Peoria*, 96.
[95] Sarah Okeson, "The PHA's Geraldine Mitchell: Never at a Loss for Words," *Peoria Journal-Star*, July 7, 1996, A1.

banking industries, held more semi-skilled and skilled positions in private sector as well as utilities and telephone companies, and held far more public sector jobs than before in health care, education, postal work, and government employment. The first black official was appointed to the city council in 1959, and the first black school principal appointed in 1962.[96]

Residential segregation began to erode in the late 1950s after a 1954 city council investigation revealed the possibility of segregation in the Taft Homes soon to be constructed. With the adoption of an open housing policy at Taft, according to Romeo Garrett, no incidents of racial violence or intimidation were reported between whites and blacks. Garrett argues that racial violence did not occur when a black family bought a house in an all-white area of the city in 1959, although the family reported receiving threatening phone calls. Key to forestalling any possible outbreak of violence were police statements that they would arrest anyone inciting violence, and the support for civil rights of the local Catholic diocese.[97] Residential segregation persisted through the 1960s, however. As of 1970, nearly sixty-four percent of African Americans still lived in the southwest corner of Peoria bracketed by Seventh Avenue (now Martin Luther King Jr. Drive) on the north, Western Avenue on the west, Franklin Street to the east, and Lincoln Avenue to the south.[98] Although about 1,500 blacks also lived just northeast of Peoria's downtown, with many residing in the desegregated Taft Homes housing projects, and a couple hundred more around Peoria Stadium on the city's north side, most neighborhoods in the city remained over ninety percent white.

In the 1960s, Caterpillar deepened its ties to the Peoria area, invigorated the city's urban renewal efforts, and bolstered the investments of local business people by constructing its new

[96] Garrett, *Negro in Peoria*, 31, 47-55. The following chapter examines black employment at Caterpillar.
[97] Ibid., *Negro in Peoria*, 121-122.
[98] About 300 African Americans lived in several blocks just south of Lincoln Avenue above Jefferson Avenue. Since this area is immediately adjacent to the section described above, I included the population statistics in my formulation.

world corporate headquarters and offices overlooking the waterfront downtown. Having initially planned to build its office complex several miles north of the city in Mossville, Caterpillar decided to locate its headquarters within the city proper. It was persuaded to do so after Sears chose to remain in downtown Peoria instead of moving to a suburban shopping center ten miles away. With its threat to move out of town as its lease on a four-story building was set to expire, Sears incited fears among local business leaders, such as F. M. Bourland, vice-president of the First Federal Savings and Loan Association in Peoria, of the city's decline but, just as importantly, their "downtown interests going down the drain in 10 to 15 years. Certainly, one of our motives was to help the city…But for us, the profit motive was very real…we had to protect our own sizable investment in downtown."[99] This prompted Bourland and seven other local business officials to form the Peoria Development Corporation (PDC), which planned to keep Sears in the city by purchasing a large strip of waterfront property. Ironically, crucial financial assistance came from Sears's department store rivals. With $100,000 from the owners of Bergner's, and an agreement with Carson Pirie Scott to swap three waterfront lots for stock in the Development Corporation, the PDC acquired two square blocks in 1961 that, by 1965, was Sears's new location. The investment paid off for the PDC overall and especially for Bergner's and Carson Pirie Scott, whose own downtown locations experienced higher sales volume several years after Sears moved.[100]

By 1967, Caterpillar had completed and moved into its new offices next door to Sears. Yet vital to its move was satisfying Caterpillar's demand that the dilapidated county courthouse that had occupied this land be razed, and a new courthouse relocated elsewhere downtown. Funding for a new courthouse required a referendum for issuing bonds, which the conservative

[99] Adde, *Nine Cities*, 111.
[100] Ibid., 113. Sears eventually moved to the Northwoods Mall, which opened in 1973, on September 19, 1998.

county had thrice rejected. However, Peoria business people lobbied the Illinois state legislature to pass a law that at once eliminated the need for a referendum, and allowed community leaders to form a Public Buildings Commission to issue bonds to fund land development, which it did for Caterpillar's new headquarters.

Celebrating Peoria's being named an "All American City" for the second time in 1967 further illustrated its commitment to the city. One of the company papers for its Peoria employees, *Caterpillar Folks,* heralded the city's award by trumpeting the company's moving its "corporate headquarters from California to this area. We decided to build the East Peoria Plant into our largest single manufacturing operation. We have made this our research and engineering center…All of these have been decisions in favor of this, the Peoria area. And looking back on them…we can happily say that they have been good decisions. Caterpillar has prospered in Peoria, and Peorians have prospered with us."[101] This prosperity helped to hone what it called "the Caterpillar image," which "has been earned over many years and is a very real asset. It has come to mean to others that we are a good company to work for, a good company to invest in, a good company to do business with, and a good company to have in a community."[102]

Conclusion

By the late 1960s, much had changed in the Peoria area. Civil rights activism prompted significant alterations in daily social relations, opening opportunities and bringing greater equality for African Americans as consumers and workers. The city's downtown area had drawn important, well-known national companies in Sears and Caterpillar, which were also cornerstones for the local retail and manufacturing sectors. This spurred waterfront development,

[101] "Peoria—All America City," *Caterpillar Folks*, Peoria, IL, March 31, 1967, Vol. XVII, No. 25, 2, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 2, File 1, ALUA-WSU.
[102] "The Caterpillar Image," *Tracks and Treads*, Aurora, Il., December 1964, Vol. 6, No. 3, 4, Ag-Imp, Series 4, Box 1, *Tracks and Treads*: Caterpillar Tractor Company, 1959-1967 file, ALUA-WSU.

increased the city's tax revenues, and helped revitalize a blighted neighborhood. The area's largest employer, Caterpillar grew leaps and bounds, from a large national company with an international presence to a dominant corporation with global manufacturing operations and control of worldwide markets. With thriving industries, low unemployment, improvements in its urban landscape, and economic benefits beginning to spread to its African American community, Peorians viewed their future with measured optimism. While the need for social and economic improvements remained, such as reducing the income disparity between white and black families, the city had done much to shed its image as a "backwater."[103]

Fundamental to the transformation of postwar Peoria was the more prevalent role that Caterpillar had in shaping economic and social relations in the community. The paychecks it issued were instrumental to sustaining the local economy. As it became the largest employer in an industry that became ever more vital to Peoria's economy, the company wielded its vast financial resources and personnel to shape its image among its employees and the community. Discourses couched in paternalistic tones that knitted themes of anti-communism, free trade, and competitive success were tailored to connect a largely sympathetic, conservative community with the company's business objectives. Crucially, presenting its image and objectives as benevolent and productive to the community shifted the public's focus from the often conflict-ridden relationship defining social relations at work between the company and its unionized factory workers, who developed their own responses and perspectives on the company's day-to-day operations. Characterizing its postwar ascent as the product of a free enterprise system elided the fact that Caterpillar relied heavily on federal policies—from issuing military contracts, to ensuring access to global markets through trade and foreign policy—to secure its place atop the earthmoving industry. By providing relatively stable employment for over 20,000 local

[103] Derber, *Labor in Illinois*, 303.

workers even as its manufacturing base expanded abroad, Caterpillar staved off questions as to whether or not its moves overseas might harm Peoria's economy. Its capacity to shape the earthmoving industry and how the local community perceived its operations reveal the considerable power the company exercised in Peoria.

Relations between the far larger white population and the much smaller but growing African American community improved considerably in the postwar period over a more violent, segregated history. However, this evolution proceeded unevenly for black Peorians. Although they achieved gains in occupational and housing opportunities, most remained confined to a few neighborhoods with substandard housing, and many lacked upward mobility on the job. In both spaces, blacks and whites occupied spaces in which race still shaped actions, perceptions, experiences, and outcomes. Caterpillar in the years to come would play a prominent role in how white and black workers experienced and perceived work, and their places within and outside the factory walls.

Chapter 2: Grappling with Globalization: Labor Relations and the Limits of Solidarity and Community in the Era of Global Production

At the 1964 convention of the International Metalworkers Federation, the UAW's report reflected a growing anxiety that belied its image and position as one of the strongest labor unions in the US. Fearful of the power of "giant international corporations" to shift operations around the world, and its implications for union members, the UAW took the unprecedented step of diverting interest and dividend payments from its strike fund investments to its newly created International Free World Labor Defense Fund. "Within one world," the report warned, "there has grown up and interlocked world of corporations" that workers could only challenge with "an operating international solidarity program." Seeking to assist unions abroad that faced the "same problems which haunt American workers," the UAW saw in the Metalworkers Federation and other international labor institutions a nascent "vision of international labor solidarity" that could become a "reality at union meetings…steward training sessions, and seminars."[1]

Yet for workers at Caterpillar, which had opened several new factories around the world in the 1960s, the "vision of international labor solidarity" did not materialize. Despite some overtures toward international solidarity in the 1970s, there is little evidence indicating that the International's efforts resonated with rank-and-file workers in Peoria, the center of Cat's business operations. Why did the disquiet about corporate power that motivated the UAW to fund solidarity efforts around the world not resonate among its members at Caterpillar?

This chapter examines the UAW and workers at Caterpillar as they encountered a new, global landscape of industrial production. It argues that, as the UAW grappled with the proliferation of global labor markets, possible remedies such as international solidarity failed to

[1] "In a Time of International Corporations," Report of the UAW International Affairs Department draft 1964, UAW International Affairs Department Victor Reuther and Lewis Carliner Collection, File 19, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University—hereafter UAW IAD, VR/LC, ALUA-WSU.

resonate with Local 974 members in Peoria. Instead, pressing problems at work, as well as strong local and national identities, shaped American workers' strategies and perspectives in the postwar period. Social and cultural cohesion at work and in local communities fostered shop floor solidarity and militancy that strengthened the union's position with the company, providing workers with previously unattainable levels of financial and occupational security. However, this localized strength was fraught with significant fissures—along racial and gender lines, between workers, between the UAW International and Local 974, and within the local community—that portended problems with the spread of global production.

A focus on internal union politics and shop floor conditions provides not only important insight into the priorities and conflict-ridden relationship between union and company, but also within the UAW itself. It also proffers a critique of postwar contractualist labor relations and unionism that reveals workers' distinct vulnerability to the sweeping changes that the globalization of work, and the deindustrialization that resulted in factory towns such as Peoria, wrought in the 1980s. Additionally, the long-standing conservatism in the Peoria area provides an important case study to examine how workplace militancy coexisted with political and social conservatism among union members. In the process, it demands a reconsideration of the trope of a rightward political turn among America's working class, for conservatism dominated Peoria politics throughout much of the twentieth century.

Origins of Local 974 and Contractualism at Caterpillar

The origins of industrial unionism in Caterpillar's East Peoria factory and local 974 lay in the 1930s, and entail the brief but intense rivalry between the UAW and the Farm Equipment Workers Union (FE), a left-led union in the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) that had represented workers at Caterpillar, Deere, and International Harvester. Strike activity and signs

of solidarity surfaced on July 3, 1934, when a group of 500 foundry workers (out of 750) in East Peoria stopped working. Led by members of the Molders' craft union, the employees sought wage increases and preferences from the company on re-employment placement for twenty-five workers who had been laid off in May. After a week-long strike that included incidents of picket-line violence between picketers and workers not honoring the picket line, and through the mediation of the National Labor Board, they reached a settlement.[2]

Combining traditional tactics with the innovative sit-down strike that had recently proved successful for the nascent UAW during its famous forty-four day strike in Flint, Michigan, the Amalgamated called and held a recognition strike on the evening of April 6, 1937, in which a group of workers inside the East Peoria plant, joined by approximately fifty others who climbed the outside gates, simultaneously held a sit-down strike.[3] The strike ended on April 9 when the two sides signed a contract representing the majority of the workers in East Peoria, and the Amalgamated eventually became a part of FE in 1938. Granted affiliation with the CIO as the Farm Equipment Workers Organizing Committee in November 1938, FE overcame stubborn company resistance to organize workers at Caterpillar, Deere, and Harvester by 1942.[4]

Seeking to expand into the earthmoving industry, the UAW wielded a two-pronged strategy against FE. It attempted to convince the militant but cash-strapped FE to join it as a division within the UAW. It also contested FE's jurisdictional rights in the Agricultural

---

[2] Boyd Alma Murphy, "History of the Peoria Labor Movement, 1929-1939" (M.A. Thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1955), 61-62. The terms of the settlement were not disclosed in local papers, but proved sufficient to end the strike.

[3] Murphy, "History of the Peoria Labor Movement, 1929-1939," 61-62, 101-105. For an excellent history of the Flint sit-down strike, see Sidney Fine, *Sit-down: The General Motors Strike of 1936-1937* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969).

[4] Resolution #7 of F.E.W.O.C, July 13, 1940, Chicago, IL; Letter from Grant W. Oakes, Chair F.E.W.O.C. to George W. Addes, UAW Secretary-Treasurer, January 22, 1941, UAW President's Office, Walter P. Reuther, Box #93, File #7, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University—hereafter WPR, ALUA-WSU; F.E.W.O.C. Resolution and Minutes of Executive Board Meeting, April 27, 1941; Letter from Grant W. Oakes to Philip Murray, President CIO, October 8, 1941, WPR, Box #93, File #8, Farm Equipment Merger 1941-1943, ALUA-WSU.

Implements (Ag-Imp) with the CIO, arguing that allowing two CIO unions to represent Ag-Imp workers made it vulnerable to raids from the rival American Federation of Labor (AFL). As early as 1942, the UAW tried to organize farm equipment workers. When F.E.W.O.C. chairman Grant Oakes petitioned the UAW for funds to help organize Harvester, whose place in the industry and anti-unionism led Oakes to characterize it as "the GM of farm equipment," UAW Secretary-Treasurer George Addes demurred, citing the outstanding issue of jurisdiction within Ag-Imp. UAW officials fueled dissent among political outsiders from FE Local 105 at Cat's Peoria factory, and Local 108 in Harvester's McCormick Works—the biggest locals at each company—by meeting in 1945 in an unsuccessful effort to raid FE's large locals. FE leaders resented the raids, branding those who worked with the UAW as "quislings and traitors," and appealed to CIO president Philip Murray to intervene on their behalf. While Murray, in the summer of 1945, urged the competing unions to iron out their differences in order to streamline and hasten organizing efforts in the industry, the FE, concerned about losing power and ideological autonomy within the larger, liberal UAW, resisted.[5]

The two unions nearly combined in 1947. However, newly elected UAW president Walter Reuther feared that the addition of FE's left-wing officers would tip the balance of power against his anti-communist caucus, and mustered enough opposition to vote down affiliation.[6] After the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, which among other things stripped unions of representation rights if union officers refused to sign non-communist affidavits, the UAW gained

[5] Testimony of Joseph Mattson Before the National CIO Jurisdictional Committee, April 1945; Caterpillar Local 105 Steward's Bulletin, July 25, 1945, Vol. 2, No. 2; Report of the Jurisdiction Committee, CIO, July 16, 1945; Box #93, File #10 Farm Equipment Merger 1945; Letter from George F. Addes to Grant W. Oakes, February 3, 1941, Box #93, File #7, WPR, ALAU-WSU.

[6] Statement to the International Executive Board, UAW-CIO, June 20, 1947, 1-3, WPR, Box 93, File 12, ALUA-WSU; Robert Zieger, *The CIO: 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 280. The terms of the agreement, drafted by Reuther's left-wing political rivals within the UAW, would have granted FE autonomous status within the UAW, and strengthened the anti-Reuther caucus at meetings, conventions and elections.

FE's members at Caterpillar and eliminated FE as an important political rival. Caterpillar refused to bargain with FE Local 105 because its national and local leaders stridently opposed the law's anti-union provisions and therefore would not sign the non-communist affidavits, thus forfeiting the right to represent the workers in May 1948 and depriving FE of about one-fourth of its total membership. After the UAW defeated the International Association of Machinists (IAM-AFL) in a run-off election, it formed Local 974 in June and negotiated its first contract with Cat. The UAW helped evict FE from the CIO, and by the early 1950s eclipsed it as the dominant union within the Ag-Imp industry, representing workers at Caterpillar rivals John Deere, International Harvester, and J. I. Case.[7]

Solidarity Forged: Industrial Democracy

Local 974 grew significantly as Caterpillar expanded its Peoria-area facilities. In the 1955 negotiations, it won representation rights for more 3,000 workers at several units in the vast East Peoria complex, and later encompassed workers at a foundry in Mapleton, Morton Parts facility, Mossville Engine, and a factory in Delavan as well. At first, the company planned to transfer workers from existing, unionized facilities to new—and non-union—ones. Initially it proposed that these units should not be included in Local 974's labor agreement despite its plans to move many of its members, which the Local and International adamantly opposed, causing Caterpillar to relent.[8]

Local 974 consistently showed Cat its collective strength by striking at the end of every contract from the late 1950s through 1983, completely shutting down all factories where it

[7] UAW-CIO IEB Summary, June 7, 1948, 6; UAW-CIO IEB Summary and Agenda: Quarterly Meeting, September 13, 1948; Box #6, UAW International Executive Board Meetings Collection, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University—hereafter UAW IEB, ALUA-WSU; Zieger, *CIO*, 280; Milton Derber, *Labor in Illinois; The Affluent Years, 1945-1980* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 295-296.

[8] Letter from Pat Greathouse to Roger Kelley, Caterpillar Industrial Relations Department, 8/20/57 and Morton Agreement, November 1, 1957 Between UAW 974 and Caterpillar, UAW Agricultural Implement Department [8/9/76—date included to specifically indicate currently unprocessed materials], Box 11, L. 974 #3 File, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University—hereafter Ag-Imp 8/9/76, ALUA-WSU.

represented the workforce. Since the UAW represented the vast majority of Caterpillar's and workers in the heavy machinery, by the early 1960s it was not only able to establish but in fact dictate pattern bargaining, in which the basic contractual terms between the UAW and a given company became the benchmarks for the rest of the industry.[9] In 1967, the UAW successfully negotiated its first central contract with Caterpillar, further consolidating its strength in Ag-Imp and against its biggest corporation.[10]

Local militancy and UAW power brought the membership greater financial security than they had before through steady gains in wages, cost-of-living allowances to keep pace with inflation, retirement income from a company-invested pension, and supplemental unemployment benefit (SUB) pay to offset periodic layoffs. The UAW negotiated the first pension at Caterpillar in 1950 and, by 1970, had won the 30-year-and-out pension retirement provision.[11] Hourly and annual earnings for unionized workers at Cat significantly outpaced other area laborers, especially agricultural workers in the primarily rural counties surrounding Peoria, making a job at the company quite lucrative.[12]

Crucially, workers also gained important protections in the workplace. A detailed job classification system delineated responsibilities for 524 different occupations across all skill levels in the 1958 contract. This system determined what tasks workers should—and should *not*—perform, preventing management from indiscriminately assigning work or combining—and eliminating—jobs. This fostered solidarity among workers in departments, who could

[9] Notable exceptions where the UAW did not represent Caterpillar workers were the Joliet, IL factory represented by the International Association of Machinists, and parts distribution facilities in the South and Southwest; see "UAW-Caterpillar Intra-Corporation Council Minutes, January 29, 1966, Cleveland, OH, 3; September 26, 1969, Toronto, Ontario, 2, UAW Ag-Imp 8/9/76, Accession #354, Box 2, ALUA-WSU.
[10] Central Contract, WPR, Box #50, File #5 Caterpillar Company 1967-1969, ALUA-WSU.
[11] Handwritten notes, "Co. final written proposal 8/31/50," UAW Ag-Imp 8/9/76, Box #8, Pension Agreements folder ALUA-WSU; *UAW Caterpillar Settlement*, 14, UAW President's Office, Leonard Woodcock Collection Series I, Box #2, File 8, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University—hereafter UAW LW ALUA-WSU.
[12] City Planning and Zoning Commission, *Planning Peoria: A Master Plan Report* (Peoria, IL, 1969), 42, Table 20.

collectively protest what they deemed unfair assignments of work. Through the detailed grievance system their contracts provided, workers could contest numerous management decisions such as production quotas, job classifications, disciplinary actions, overtime assignments, layoffs and others.[13]

The system of workplace contractualism also gave workers the right to strike over any health and safety issues that presented immediate dangers, and over increased production standards if a backlog of unresolved grievances over speedups existed.[14] They also used their contractual power to combat speedups by filing grievances en masse—particularly before contract negotiations—and striking, as they did in 1964, to recalibrate the pace and terms of production in their favor. A 1964 speedup strike revolved around the company's attempts to assign certain moving equipment, to add an extra machine to a gear-shaping operation, and to raise production standards for welders on the D6C tractor. The UAW won most of its demands in the strike settlement.[15] Such militancy reflected an aggressively pursued workplace solidarity, helping them stabilize the pace of production and the job classification system.

974 members also conducted wildcat strikes to vent frustration over production standards, a lack of progress in negotiations and grievance handling, or to display their displeasure with what they perceived as callous managerial behavior. First-shift workers at Cat's Mossville engine plant shut down operations there, and others at Morton Parts, Mapleton Foundry, and the

[13] Agreement Entered Into November 29, 1958 Between Caterpillar Tractor Co. and the International Union, UAW-AFL-CIO and its Local Union No. 974, Exhibit A, Section II, Box #2, Ag-Imp 8-9-76, ALUA-WSU. In 1969, according to an election flyer that C.L. "Curt" Martin circulated, there were 551 job classifications in the 1967 collective bargaining agreement; C.L. "Curt" Martin 974 Membership Group flyer, Ag-Imp 8-9-76, Box #10, 1969 Local 974 Election File, ALUA-WSU. By the 1986 contract, the number of classifications was reduced to 83; Larry Solomon Interview, at his home, Cerro Gordo, IL., November 24, 2004.

[14] Letter from John Rice, International Rep. UAW Agricultural Implement Dept. to Ed Bernard, International Representative, Region #, March 30, 1964, Ag-Imp 8/9/76, Box 11, L. 974 #3 File, ALUA-WSU.

[15] See "Cat Explains Settlement Terms in 3-Week Strike," *Peoria Journal-Star*, March 2, 1964, B-1; Letters from Jim Ward, Caterpillar Labor Relations Manager, to UAW Local 974, 8/20/63 and 9/4/63, Letter from Harvey Pearson, Asst. Director UAW Caterpillar Department to All UAW Caterpillar Local Unions, 9/9/63, Letter from Karl Hansen, VP of Booz Allen to J.K. Ward, Caterpillar and Harvey Pearson, UAW, 12/13/63, UAW Ag-Imp, Box 11, L. 974 #4 File, ALUA-WSU.

Technical Center and hose plant joined for several days in November 1969, because non-union people were running new machines that Mossville workers felt union workers ought to run, and on which the company wanted to set production standards. According to 974 President Bill Short, over 800 unresolved grievances had built up, but the UAW failed to authorize the strike.[16]

Race on the Shop Floor

The persistent exclusion of blacks and women from most jobs at Caterpillar resulted from a combination of factors such as corporate hiring practices, reliance on informal word-of-mouth networks, racial segregation in and around Peoria, and constructions of race and gender. Most workers interviewed described coming to the company through networks of family and friends who either put in a good word for them with supervisors they knew, or referred them because they knew the company was hiring. Jerry Brown, who was Local 974's bargaining chairman in the 1980s and president during the turbulent 1990s, recalled that when began working at Caterpillar in 1965, his starting pay of $2.56 per hour was over a dollar an hour more than his previous job at a clothing store, and over fifty cents an hour higher than at a local corn processor. Brown's uncle suggested that he apply at Caterpillar, and referred him to management. According to Brown, this was common practice at the time. "He [the uncle] put in a word for me to get me hired…At that time, they [managers] would ask you if you had any relatives available to work."[17] This kept the workforce tightly knit, as fathers saw their sons and sometimes grandsons work beside them, or at least securing reliable, well-paid work in one of Caterpillar's many facilities around Peoria.[18]

---

[16] "Wildcat Strike at Caterpillar Fades; Caused by Steward Curb," *Peoria Journal-Star*, March 26, 1968, A3; "Cat Mossville Plant Wildcat Strike of 1,900 Continues," *Peoria Journal-Star*, November 6, 1969, D1; UAW Rejects Local Cat Strike, Work Resumed," *Peoria Journal-Star*, November 13, 1969, A1-2.
[17] Jerry Brown Interview, April 3, 2007 at his home, Tremont, IL.
[18] For similar hiring practices elsewhere, see Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (NY: New Press, 2001), 51-52; Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 91-123.

It also ensured that the workforce was overwhelmingly white and male. Most unskilled occupations required heavy lifting and arduous, repetitive work, while semiskilled and skilled labor instilled and drew upon specialized mechanical skills—all of which had long been deemed men's work. White men held most jobs, especially the semiskilled and skilled jobs. Of the 2,233 craftsmen that the employed company-wide, exactly seven were listed as "Negro" and male, and exactly one more was female. Only 283 semiskilled operatives out of 11,772, or 2.4%, were Negro men, while 187 more, or 1.6 %, were women—eleven of whom were listed as Negro. Most African-American men were relegated to foundry and laborer work during this period, with others working as janitors or in company cafeterias. The apprentice programs severely limited access to white men, with only one of 353 apprentices in 1966 company-wide listed as Negro and male. Although Blacks comprised 9.6% of Peoria's population in 1966, they only held 2.6% of Cat jobs in the Peoria area (486 out of 18,271).[19]

Even skilled black workers faced racial barriers at Caterpillar. Ed Nelson, who in 1945 became the first African American hired at the company's East Peoria facility, was offered a janitor's position sweeping up chips in the foundry. This was despite his extensive experience that included successfully completing Caterpillar's diesel mechanics courses in 1943 while serving in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and working as a diesel mechanic and instructor at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida during World War Two. Nelson said in a 1996 interview that, when he asked what opportunities for advancement there were, the company interviewer tersely replied, "Not much." "'Then I'm not interested,' I told them. I told them I came here to work on the assembly line, and I could go somewhere else." Nelson left, but the

[19] Equal Employment Opportunity Employer Information Report EEO-1, 12/31/66, UAW Ag-Imp 8/9/76, Box #11, Caterpillar—Fair Practices 1966 File, ALUA-WSU.

company called him back the next day, when he began a twenty-four year career as a machinist with Caterpillar.

Yet Nelson serves as the exception to the rule regarding race and opportunities for good jobs across skill levels and blue-collar and white-collar jobs at Caterpillar. Despite employing 39,511 workers in the US in 1965, just 1,006 were African American, and 272 more belonged to other non-white groups—a mere 3.56% of the company's domestic workforce. A 1966 National Industrial Conference Board study with detailed occupational delineations reveals that, of the 1,278 African American and non-white workers whom Caterpillar employed in 1965, that 1,097 (85.83%) were concentrated in semi-skilled, unskilled, and service work. These figures for total non-white employees in 1965, as low as they are, actually represented a 100% increase from the 637 non-white workers Caterpillar employed just two years earlier. (See Table 2.1)

Hiring by word-of-mouth and social networks at Cat typically meant white male workers referred other white men for Cat to consider hiring. The result was a level of racial segregation in Cat factories that closely paralleled spatial segregation in Peoria and surrounding communities, and chapter 1 discussed. The cities and towns around the city in which many Cat workers lived were even more thoroughly segregated. Morton (population 10,419), ten miles east of Peoria and home to Cat's sprawling parts warehouse, and was also exclusively white, as were nearby Creve Coeur (population 6,440) and Marquette Heights (2,758) just south of the city. East Peoria, also in adjacent Tazewell County and the site of Caterpillar's massive factory complex, counted a mere eleven African Americans among its 15,747 inhabitants.[20]

This had significant ramifications for labor market opportunities in Peoria. In a time when the labor process at Cat was its most labor intensive and employment at its highest, more

[20] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Housing: 1970 Block Statistics Final Report HC (3) 71 Peoria, Ill. Urbanized Area.*

than half the area's population received little consideration for work at Cat. Nor did these groups find work in Peoria's construction trades. Similar word-of-mouth hiring practices among family and friends kept skilled work in the building trades in white male hands. Forced to work elsewhere when Peoria's largest employer and others failed to hire them, women and people of color worked in disproportionate numbers in the region's service sector jobs, which paid significantly less.[21] Importantly, these hiring practices had long-term effects for working-class Peorians. As other major employers such as Wabco, Pabst, and Johnnie Walker shifted production and closed down area factories and Caterpillar itself suffered losses in the early 1980s, it signaled the decline of industrial work in the area. With Caterpillar doing little outside hiring throughout the 1980s, relying upon some of the thousands of laid-off employees when business improved in the late 1980s, the generation of white male workers hired in the 1960s became ensconced in the best-paying jobs available.

References to race were rare in Local 974's newspaper. Yet some, including the occasional slur, were published. One reflected the resentment among many whites that African Americans were unfairly receiving the tax dollars of hard-working whites. In his "Things To Know" column, Frank Miller offered this observation: "There has been quite a bit of talk by some of our political leaders to turn over our 51st state to the Black Americans. That state is the State of Taxes."[22] Implicit is a level of comfort in a space that white men dominated to make such a stereotypical remark without risk of rebuke, or worse.

Women were excluded from most factory jobs as well. The pattern of Cat's hiring primarily white men for factory work strongly implies biases that constructed these jobs as men's work. Even as the company started hiring women into more shop floor jobs in the 1970s,

[21] Derber, *Labor in Illinois*, 302-303.
[22] Frank Miller, "Things To Know," *UAW Local 974 News*, September 10, 1969, Vol., 17 No. 16, 3. See also Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (New York: Scribner, 2008), 114-115.

according to Jim O'Connor, most of the women were relegated to "light" operations such as hand trucking, which involved using a manually controlled power jack to lift and tow parts to and from work stations. O'Connor also remembered seeing increasing numbers of women in management by the 1980s, yet not in "heavy" factory operations requiring considerable lifting.[23] The shop floor and labor relations system thus became gendered spaces characterized by rough language between male co-workers and between workers and management.[24] Newsletters during the 1960s often included pictures of young women in bathing suits posing during beauty contests to appeal to the nearly all-male membership. They also inserted brief barbs aimed at women in the space between articles such as this that treated ogling women as normative: "A man is getting old, when he inspects the food instead of the waitress!"[25]

Once the company began to hire women for factory work in greater numbers in the 1960s, the new workers faced some resistance, including the perception that they could not handle the rigors of manual industrial labor. Jane Evans, who was hired into Caterpillar's East Peoria factory in 1969, was put right away on stamping track plates, a "mankiller" job that required heavy lifting to place on and remove steel track squares from a stamping press that eventually became part of the heavy outer track belt. "My supervisor looked like he expected me to quit the first day," Evans recalled with a laugh. "But I've always been the type of person to prove you wrong, and I've never let people, man or woman, tell me I can't do something. So even though I was sore as hell that first week and could barely move, I showed him I could do

[23] Jim O'Connor Interview, December 18, 2006 at his home, Marquette Heights, Illinois; Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex during World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987) discusses such gendered divisions and constructions of work, and it is from this that I borrow the terms "light" and "heavy" to generally demarcate what work women typically performed at Cat ("light"), and that which they did not ("heavy").

[24] Brown Interview; Tony Green Interview, October 13, 2006, Hotel Pere Marquette, Peoria, IL. While this was typically the case for the (white male) workers I interviewed, the recollections of these two former presidents of 974, and the liberal use of profanity to frame interactions with co-workers and management, starkly underscore this point.

[25] "Quickies," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 17, No. 14, July 23, 1969, 5.

that job. After that, the boss pretty much left me alone."[26] The crucial lesson to draw from Evans's first, tough experiences on the job is not necessarily that she achieved a personal victory over a supervisor, but rather that this skepticism greeted Evans as soon she started the tough job. While many other male Caterpillar employees who were interviewed began by making track shoes, no one else revealed management's skepticism about their capacity to do the job. In fact, some indicated that the fact that they were "big, strong men" was exactly why so many new male hires started on this job.

Co-workers disciplined each other with coarse language that questioned one's masculinity and humanity. Production employees deemed to be too close to management were called "suck asses" and "ass kissers." Workers who exceeded production quotas were dehumanized as "rate rats." It was not uncommon for production workers and foremen to yell and swear at each other, often without disciplinary action. Interactions between men on the shop floor inherently involved showing strength and toughness in order not to appear weak or pliable, especially to supervisors. The union paper cultivated this atmosphere with prescriptive articles advising men on various matters such as child rearing. One column by a woman, Geraldine Hertz entitled "What Kind of Father Are You?" urged men to "be tender with a teen-aged daughter, but…tough for his boys." Hertz averred that men must convey strength and discipline to the family to teach children to "respect his authority." Of particular concern to Hertz was that men not allow women to dominate family life, which she suggested was the "classic example of the home that produces a homosexual."[27] The lessons for the home stood for the factory floor as well—not exhibiting strength could produce a homosexual, if not in actuality, at least in the eyes of one's co-workers with whom one spent eight hours a day.

---

[26] Jane Evans, Interview at the UAW Local 974 union hall, East Peoria, Il., April 23, 2011.
[27] Geraldine Hertz, "What Kind of Father Are You?" *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 17, No. 13, July 9, 1969, 3.

UAW power at Caterpillar grew through an admixture of shop floor militancy, contractual gains, and social cohesion characterized by racial and gender exclusion that paralleled Peoria's labor market. Workers behaved militantly at work, relying on a contractual system that afforded them degrees of latitude in dealing with management. However, it coexisted with a general conservatism in Peoria, and among some of its members. Contractualism and workplace jurisprudence became entrenched in an important series of decisions in 1960. Three important court decisions known as the *Steelworkers Trilogy* upheld the primacy of workplace grievance and arbitration systems to resolve disputes in workplaces with contracts containing said systems.[28] These rulings confirmed that the workplace and the system of industrial jurisprudence would be the locus of power and dispute resolution over work rules and contractual provisions, not the nation's judicial system.

The trust that unions invested in contractualism paid considerable dividends as long as a fairly stable labor relations system persisted. Yet *Steelworkers* ensured that dispute resolution and, crucially, the day-to-day workplace problems to be resolved, would be removed from the public purview. Reliance on this system further distanced the workplace and its operations from the local community, whose members might pass by Cat's large factories yet know next to nothing about the conditions under which workers toiled, or the processes required to make heavy machinery.

Furthermore, Local 974's trust in contractualism meant that it did not reach out and form connections with community groups to broaden its base of support. John Gwynn, executive director of Peoria's NAACP, said that unions such as 974 did not reach out to African Americans for political or social outreach, cutting itself off from a growing segment of the population and

[28] Jack Metzgar, *Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 107.

failing to foster a better understanding between two distant groups.[29] Given the racial segregation at work and in Peoria, it seems likely that race played a prominent role in this slight.

This reliance on workplace contractualism allowed various forces in the local community, such as Cat's communications network, to shape perspectives about business matters. It also allowed workers' other allegiances, including nationalism and religion, to fall within the purview of Peoria's long-standing conservatism without a strong countervailing narrative from the more liberal UAW. Although the UAW held considerable power at work, it did not go unchallenged. In fact, the union grew at the same time that the company began to shift manufacturing to new factories overseas. This prompted considerable concern within the upper ranks of the UAW over how to match corporate expansion overseas.

Unrequited Internationalism: Global Production and the UAW

Caterpillar's worldwide growth in the 1950s paralleled its widespread US expansion in the 1950s, establishing it as a global manufacturer and challenging the formidable, but essentially national, countervailing strength the UAW held. By integrating new plants in Glasgow, Leicester, Newcastle, and Melbourne with its long-standing network of domestic and overseas dealerships, Caterpillar diversified its manufacturing base to minimize its product delivery time to its growing foreign markets that increasingly comprised its customer base, and that Cat coveted. In 1960, forty-eight percent of Cat's total sales went overseas, much of it originating from its American factories.[30] It also allowed Caterpillar to circumvent much of the tariff burden it incurred, both domestically and overseas, for its intra-corporate and international trade. After World War Two, in order to provide some measure of protection for their devastated

[29] John Gwynn Interview with Milton Derber, Milton Derber Papers, 1938-1987, Series 22/2/22, Box 11, Peoria 1982 Folder, University Archives, University of Illinois—hereafter MDP UIA.
[30] "Caterpillar 1960 Profit, Sales Fell, but Foreign Sales Rose 26% to High," *Wall Street Journal*, January 23, 1961, 15.

economies and national companies, European nations raised tariffs on American products to significantly higher levels than on other nations' imports. For example, in the nascent European Economic Community (EEC) in 1962, duties on the tractors, excavators, and trucks that Caterpillar made were nine to fifteen percent on American-made goods entering EEC nations—a steep price increase on large machines that, even in the early 1960s, could cost six figures. The EEC at this time was making the transition toward eliminating tariffs on many products made within and traded between EC countries, and establishing a common external tariff.[31]

Shifting production to Europe, South America, and Australia allowed Caterpillar to skirt these tariffs and realize greater profits from the sales in the rapidly-recovering postwar Western Europe, whose aggregate Gross National Product, though behind that of the US, was growing at a precipitously faster rate than the US.[32] Soon after the round of tariff reductions, Caterpillar announced that it would enlarge its factories in Brazil and France, while extending its foreign-based production into Mexico and South Africa. Additionally, Cat entered into a joint venture in 1963 with Japanese manufacturer—and acknowledged competitor—Mitsubishi, Shin-Mitsubishi Ltd., that provided the company with production facilities on six continents.[33]

Caterpillar profited from its production strategy partly because workers in its new factories, even in heavily-unionized European nations, earned far less than their American counterparts. In 1972, hourly wage scales for its production workers in the US were on average

[31] Statement of Robert S. Eckley, Manager, Business Research Department of Caterpillar Tractor Co., March 22, 1962, before the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means, *Hearings, H.R. 9900, Trade Expansion Act of 1962, 87th Congress, 2nd Session*, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1962), 1977-1986. For a table of tariffs by nation before 1962, and EEC common external tariffs from 1962 onward, see 1883.
[32] Statement of Charles W. Engelhard, Caterpillar CEO, March 12, 1962, before the before the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means, *Hearings, H.R. 9900, Trade Expansion Act of 1962, 87th Congress, 2nd* Session (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1962), 1371. According to Engelhard, the six EEC nations had a combined GNP of $260 million in 1960, while the US GNP was $504 million.
[33] "Caterpillar, Mitsubishi Plan To Form New Firm in Japan," *Wall Street Journal*, May 17, 1962, 4; *1962 Annual Report*, Caterpillar Tractor Co., 7-9.

300 to 400% higher than those at the company's Gosselies, Belgium factory, and nearly five times the rates for skilled workers in Grenoble, France.[34] (See Table 2.2)

Additionally, as the UAW pointed out with concern, increasingly international corporations such as Caterpillar reaped financial rewards from tax loopholes that allowed businesses to avoid much of their domestic tax burden. Through tactics such as transfer pricing, companies could write off the costs of doing business overseas, where the financial burdens for labor, materials, and tariffs were usually far less than in the US, onto its domestic ledger sheets, thus minimizing its profitability and therefore its tax obligation.[35]

Citing increased competition from other American companies such as Allis-Chalmers and International Harvester, Caterpillar used global business as a pretense to stand firm on wage increases and pattern bargaining during its 1961 contract negotiations with the UAW. Occurring at a time in which large corporations more frequently held hard bargaining positions on wages and were more willing to provoke strikes, Cat's tough attitude toward the UAW stood apart from other labor disputes during this period because the company stressed wage restraint in order to compete for world sales with global competitors.[36] Chairman of the board Louis Neumiller and president Harmon Eberhard told shareholders the company's top priority was "a holding of the

---

[34] "Pay Conditions in the Plants of Multinational Corporations Making Agricultural Machinery," 14, IMF World Agricultural Implement Industry Conference, Brussels, May 15-17, 1972, Box 202, Folder #5, UAW LW ALUA-WSU. The hourly wage data in this report is incomplete, for the UAW was still trying to discern the wage scales at the company's other European factories.

[35] Pat Greathouse, "A Labor View of Multinational Corporations," November 14, 1974, 1-2, Agricultural Implement Department, Date Processed 8/8/80, Box 28, "Reports, Speeches…by Pat Greathouse, 1966-1979" File, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University—hereafter Ag-Imp 8/8/80; John T. Blankinship, "International Expansion of Firms: Selected Theories and a Case Study," (Unpublished M. S. Thesis, Southern Illinois University, 1964), 42-72. For a more thorough discussion of transfer pricing and corporate tax avoidance by multinational corporations, see Richard Barnet and Ronald E. Muller, *Global Reach: The Power of the Multinational Corporations* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 157-159, 161, 206-207, 282-283.

[36] "UAW Auto Negotiations and the Needs of the US Economy," August 1961, Box 12, Folder 6, ILIR Library Union Vertical Files, 1912-2001, University Archives, University of Illinois—hereafter ILIR UIA. See Metzgar, *Striking Steel*, and Ronald Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse, 1923-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983) for two excellent studies of the corporate offensive against unions in the steel and electronics industries, respectively.

line on wage rates" in order to enhance its "ability to compete in world markets." They cast this policy as more than simply a matter of importance to the company, urging "the big and powerful labor unions [to] act in a more responsible realization that the best interests of their members cannot be forever different or separated from the best interests of the nation as a whole."[37] What was good for the company, namely cost containment and increased export sales, was good for its workers and America, according to Cat's executives. They argued that UAW's insistence upon wage increases was irresponsible—to its members, the company, indeed to the nation—because it jeopardized the company's ability, through export sales, to pass on the "benefits of increased productivity…to *all the people* in the form of lower prices."[38]

The company's campaign to "hold the line on wage rates" paid off in 1961. Cat successfully negotiated for lower wage increases than the union had demanded. The firm also emerged from the 1961 round of negotiations with a free hand to expand its overseas production base. In the months following its contract settlement with UAW, Caterpillar announced that it would enlarge its factories in Brazil and France, while extending its foreign-based production into Mexico and South Africa. Its joint venture in 1963 with Japanese manufacturer Mitsubishi, Caterpillar Mitsubishi Limited, manufactured certain large-scale tractors and track loaders for the Far East market, and provided the company with production facilities on six continents.[39] The relocation also allowed it to avoid paying higher tariffs on goods produced in and exported from the US, by moving production and targeting sales to countries with lower tariff walls.[40]

---

[37] Louis B. Neumiller and Harmon S. Eberhard, "Letter to the Shareholders," January 20, 1961, *1961 Annual Report*, Caterpillar Tractor Co., 3.
[38] Ibid, emphasis in the original.
[39] "Caterpillar, Mitsubishi Plan To Form New Firm in Japan," *Wall Street Journal*, May 17, 1962, 4; *1962 Annual Report*, Caterpillar Tractor Co., 7-9; Haycraft, *Yellow Steel*, 165-166; "International Corporations Produce Agricultural Implements on a Worldwide Basis," *UAW Solidar Report*, Vol. 1 No. 3, February-March 1965, 3, UAW ILIR, 1912-2001, Box 14, Folder 7, UIA.
[40] Blankinship, "International Expansion of Firms," 42-72.

Yet initially during the 1960s and early 1970s, UAW's international economic agenda in the Cold War period differed less in overall structure and more in details from the trade expansionism that Caterpillar and other large multinational businesses supported. The Union agreed to moderate its wage demands in 1961 under pressure from Caterpillar to "hold the line on wages" in order to enhance the company's trade competitiveness with overseas manufacturers.[41] UAW trade policy represented a precarious amalgam of nascent free-trade principles that espoused lower tariffs, increased exports and jobs for American—and especially unionized—corporations, combined with advocating government intervention domestically to protect American workers from unemployment and plant closings resulting from tariff-free trade. When the US and Canada eliminated tariffs on autos and parts shipped between the two countries, Leonard Woodcock, UAW vice-president heading the union's GM departments, testified before Congress to advocate the agreement, and UAW President Walter Reuther asserted that the trade agreement would bring wage parity between US autoworkers and their lower-paid Canadian counterparts. While the UAW's monthly paper *Solidarity* touted the agreement as "common sense," and an avenue for increased employment and trade for American and Canadian autoworkers alike, it also pointed out that the agreement intended to create jobs on both sides of the border needed to contain provisions to retrain American workers potentially laid off as a result of the trade pact.[42] Yet the article failed to explain the apparent contradiction embedded within the piece—why a trade agreement billed as a boon to American businesses, workers, and consumers would require protections in case workers lost their jobs because of the same tariff-free trade pact.

[41] Ibid.
[42] "A Trial in Trade: The Vanishing Border," *UAW Solidarity*, Vol. 9, No. 6, June 1965, 3-4. According to *Solidarity*, cars and trucks imported into Canada carried a 17.5% tariff, and parts a 25% tariff, while US duties on cars and trucks imported from Canada were 6.5% and 8.5% for parts.

Slowly, the UAW began to form international alliances with Caterpillar's foreign workers. Utilizing multinational labor coalitions such as the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the International Metalworkers Federation (IMF), the UAW and its international and local representatives began to branch out, communicating and meeting with their counterparts from Europe, Latin America and Asia. In 1967, the Federation had formed an Agricultural Implement Industry Council, at which, beginning annually in 1971 global workers from Caterpillar, Komatsu, International Harvester, J. I. Case, Terex, Massey-Ferguson, Allis Chalmers and other earthmoving equipment manufacturers gathered to "share our experience, pool our knowledge, and plan our future strategy."[43]

Despite meeting through the IMF for several years, the unions and their representatives in these industries from across the globe knew very few details about each other—their wage levels, contractual terms, number of workers at various factories, in some instances what unions, if any, represented the workforce. They did know that they shared the same large, multinational employers, and were part of a complex, international, fully integrated production system. By developing a "standard specification of design and quality at all locations," Caterpillar produced parts that were "completely interchangeable throughout the world." Of equal importance, by establishing manufacturing sites not as self-sufficient facilities but rather as units dedicated to particular component work such as foundry forging, parts manufacturing and distribution, hydraulics, and finishing assembly, Caterpillar ensured that no "single plant anywhere, including the United States, makes the complete line of Caterpillar products."[44] To this end, it had not one but multiple sites for its product lines. For example, by 1978 both the Newcastle, England and

[43] IMF World Agricultural Implement Industry Conference, March 1967, 1, UAW International Affairs Department, Herman Rebhan Collection, Box #5, File #17 IMF-UAW Ag-Imp Conference Speeches 6-8 May, 1975, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University—hereafter UAW IAD HR, ALUA-WSU.
[44] Company and Market Reports (Preparatory Document), UAW IAD HR, Box #14, ALUA-WSU.

Joliet factories assembled scrapers, bulldozers, rippers, and hydraulics, and both the Aurora, Illinois and Grenoble, France facilities made crawler tractors and loaders.[45] Although each factory usually made products with variations in size and horsepower, such an integrated system gave the company the potential, through machine and tool modifications, to shift production from one facility to another in the event of a strike, lockout, or shutdown, or to eliminate production—and jobs—at one site and transfer them to another. This insulated it from strikes in one country. On the other hand, it also opened opportunities for workers to organize across national boundaries and share knowledge about occupations and production policies to gain a strategic advantage against the company.

Seeking to curtail the "ever growing economic and political power" of the large multinational corporations dominating the Ag-Imp and earthmoving equipment industries, the Agricultural Implement Industry Council attempted to raise "employment and living standards throughout the world, and particularly in the developing countries." In a joint declaration issued at the 1972 IMF World Agricultural Implement Industry Conference, workers from twelve nations derided the corporations' "regard for human labour as they do raw material, a commodity to be purchased in the cheepest [Sic.] markets and the fruits of such labour to be sold to the consumer at the highest price…The allocation of international investments and production is determined without any real consideration of the welfare of workers and the people directly affected by such policies." Conference attendees proposed establishing "better communications and coordination of action" among international Ag-Imp workers, offering "to coordinate all practicable solidarity to achieve victory" in disputes, and "to coordinate termination dates of

[45] "News from Caterpillar: The Caterpillar Story," 4-6, UAW Research Department, Part 2 Series II, Box 93, File #16, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University—hereafter UAW RD ALUA-WSU.

collective bargaining contracts so that trade union strength can be combined to assist in the bargaining struggle in the various countries."[46]

To help bridge this divide between Cat's unions and workers, vice-president for Agricultural Implements Pat Greathouse, one of the UAW's stronger advocates of international ties, pledged at the 1972 World Conference to invite union representatives from some of Caterpillar's global factories to attend the next round of UAW negotiations with Caterpillar in Peoria. Several did on July 10, 1973. Later IMF Ag-Imp conferences, such as the one in Chicago in May 1975, expressly sought to "gather workers concerned with three, massive…multinationals [Caterpillar, Deere, and Harvester] so as to establish a concrete and viable solidarity network, one that we may call upon for help in case of need."[47] However, these meetings did little to generate acts of solidarity or long-lasting connections between either the various international unions representing Ag-Imp companies such as Caterpillar, or between their memberships. International solidarity hardly extended beyond expressions of "firmest fraternal solidarity." During their strike in May 1973 Pat Greathouse pledged to Caterpillar's union leaders in France and Belgium that the UAW would not "undertake any work of a nature designed to limit or undercut your actions."[48]

In part, these unions were still learning basic details about each other as well as the particular power dynamics between the various unions and CAT within each country. Burton

[46] Declaration of the Secound [Sic.] IMF World Agricultural Implement Industry Conference, May 15-18, 1972, 1-5, UAW IAD HR, Box 14, File #24 Ag-Imp Conference Speakers, Reports, ALUA-WSU.
[47] Letter from Burton Bendiner, IMF World Auto Councils Coordinator, to Herman Rebhan, UAW International Affairs Department, May 30th, 1973; Letter from Herman Rebhan to Pat Greathouse, June 4th, 1975; Letter from Pat Greathouse to Bernard Mourgues, n/d, UAW IAD HR, Accession #488, Box 15, File #33, UAW Caterpillar 1973-74, ALUA-WSU.;Letter from Collin Gonze to Pat Greathouse, May 19, 1975 re: Ag-Imp Follow-Up, UAW IAD HR, Box 5, File #1, US-IMF-JC Metalworkers Conference, May 3, 4, 1976, ALUA-WSU.
[48] Cable from Pat Greathouse, UAW IAD HR, Box 16, File #5, UAW Agricultural Implement Dept., 1973-76, ALUA-WSU. The latter pledge not to "undertake any work…" would have been difficult for the UAW to legally defend, since the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 expressly forbade "hot-cargo" actions—workers' refusal to handle goods made in other facilities while on strike—by unions.

Bendiner, general secretary at the IMF, informed the UAW that Force Ouvriere (F.O.), a union from Caterpillar's Grenoble factory belonging to the IMF, "had very little strength in Grenoble," and lacked the financial wherewithal to send its own representatives to the negotiations in Peoria. Bendiner also revealed that Belgium CMB, representing workers at Caterpillar's Gosselies, Belgium plant also required financial assistance to attend the negotiations because it was not "not the dominant union" there, representing fewer workers than two other, non-IMF affiliated unions.[49] According to the report circulated after the May 1975 Ag-Imp conference in Chicago, Cat management in Europe kept its job classification systems secret from both F.O. and Belgium CMB, preventing these unions from knowing the basis upon which management divided job responsibilities. Such information might have assisted unions trying to oppose management attempts to combine occupational tasks to eliminate jobs, to accurately assess the proper allocation of overtime and layoffs, to gauge and possibly contest production quotas, and other pertinent issues that their counterparts abroad who had such information could more successfully address. This illustrated the relative weakness of some European CAT workers vis-à-vis their American counterparts who negotiated with and struck to stringently delineate job responsibilities, production quotas and, subsequently, the number of workers those jobs required.[50]

There is little—if any—evidence to suggest that the potentially far-reaching proposals of the 1972 World Ag-Imp Council that championed greater international worker solidarity actually came to fruition. Although the United States sent thirty-five delegates to the 1975 WAIC—by far the largest delegation of the twelve participating countries—a mere five were rank-and-file

[49] Letter from Burton Bendiner to Herman Rebhan, May 30th, 1973, ALUA-WSU.
[50] European Metalworkers' Federation in the Community, "Caterpillar in Europe," prepared by the International Metalworkers' Federation's report for the Agricultural Implement Industry Council (Chicago, USA, 6th and 7th May, 1975), 11 August 1975, 1, 4, Research Department, Box 93, File #15 Caterpillar 1976-81, UAW RD ALUA-WSU.

workers, only three of whom belonged to the UAW. The other two were members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Lodge 851, representing Cat workers in Joliet, IL, and the UAW with its CIO history, and the IAM with its long-standing background in the AFL, neither communicated directly nor coordinated with one another collective-bargaining strategies against CAT. The other thirty were all international representatives whose work was far detached from shop-floor workers and responsibilities.[51] Nor is there evidence within bargaining minutes in the 1970s indicating proposals to coordinate UAW's contract termination dates with those of Cat's foreign factories.[52] Since 1956, the UAW had established a Cat Council of local union representatives (not including IAM-represented workers in Joliet) that convened several times annually to apprise other unionists of pressing shop-floor matters, and discuss strategies for upcoming bargaining sessions.[53] Despite the proposals articulated at the World Ag-Imp Council, and the presence of UAW International representatives the Cat Council became neither an international institution nor a forum in which issues of international solidarity might be discussed.[54] *UAW Local 974 News*, the Peoria-based semimonthly newsletter for 974's far-flung membership, never discussed working conditions, issues, actions or proposals at Cat's overseas plants. In theory and practice, international solidarity among Ag-Imp workers had little resonance in Peoria.

[51] IMF Tri-company World Agricultural Implement Conference, Meeting of Union representatives of International Harvester, Caterpillar Tractor, John Deere, Chicago, May 6 through 8, 1975, Participants, UAW International Affairs Department, Herman Rebhan Collection, Box 5, File #21, IMF-UAW Ag-Imp Conference Participants—Housing, etc, 6-8 May, 1975, UAW IAD HR ALUA-WSU.
[52] UAW Minutes—Proposals, Cat Negotiations, 1970, Ag-Imp, Accession # 354, Boxes 16, 22, 23, ALUA-WSU.
[53] Minutes Caterpillar Intra-Corporation Council of the UAW, March 24, 1956, Chicago, IL, 1, UAW Ag-Imp 8/9/76 Accession #354 Box #2, ALUA-WSU.
[54] My research entailed culling CAT Council meetings for a twenty-five year period, from 1956 to 1980. In the mid to late 1970s, other than one reference by Pat Greathouse to the uniformity of parts and the potential to move jobs (August 26, 1966, 4), I found little evidence in the minutes referring to the World Ag-Imp proposals, let alone discussing ways to implement them at UAW-represented factories in the US and Canada or into bargaining sessions with Caterpillar.

The UAW's earlier efforts to coordinate bargaining strategies in auto proved unsuccessful with their German and Japanese counterparts, whose sizable unionized workforces gave them particular strength in the IMF. Unlike American unions that were organized by industries, European metalworkers unions such as West Germany's IG Metall were organized across industries. Strikes tended to be regional rather than solely industrial actions, involving numerous employers. According to Lichtenstein, "Because no single [European] industry employed a majority of its membership, union leaders saw productivity bargaining as highly divisive."[55] The UAW had even less success when coordinating similar efforts with the conservative Japanese auto unions, which worked within a corporatist system of enterprise unionism that aligned the interests of workers and companies. Their conservatism was in part a product of purges during and after World War Two that paralleled America's own decimation of the Congress of Industrial Organization's (CIO) left-wing industrial unions and leftists in the UAW's ranks.[56] Yet Japanese unions in particular, as did their American counterparts, yoked their economic fortunes not to international unionism, but rather to export-based economics in key sectors such as auto, steel, and Ag-Imp production. Within the Cold War system of international capitalist industrialism, nations such as Japan and Germany were heavily reliant on the US market serving as the buyer of last resort, and leaders and unionists in these core industries focused on what they considered their national, rather than international, priorities.[57]

---

[55] Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor* (NY: Basic Books, 1995), 338-339; "Frontiers Throughout the World," May 1963, 10-11, ILIR, 1912-2001, Box 13, File 17, UIA.

[56] Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 339-340; Eiichi Ochiai, "Present Trends in the Japanese Trade Union Movement," in *Free Labor World* 217-218, July-August 1968, 19, ILIR, Box 14, File 7, UIA; John Price, "Lean Production at Suzuki and Toyota: a Historical Perspective," in Steve Babson ed., *Lean Work: Empowerment and Exploitation in the Global Auto Industry* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 84-85; Martin Halpern, *UAW Politics in the Cold War Era* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 201-270.

[57] See Judith Stein, *Running Steel, Running America: Race, Economic Policy, and the Decline of American Liberalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 229-237 for an informative discussion of international steel political economy.

Another likely reason for the failure of international unionism to take root lies in the complex history of contractualism between Caterpillar and the UAW, and shop-floor relations between union workers and the company's lower-level managers. The absence of references to Caterpillar's international workforce in UAW materials indicates a sense of trust and security in the labor-relations system that the two sides had forged in the previous three decades. Workers' willingness to walk off the job for various reasons reflects more than the shop-floor militancy that prevailed among Local 974 members, but the *success* of it, during this period. More than mere custom or habit, striking, even wildcat strikes, had been a reasonably safe and successful activity for Caterpillar—indeed for many American—workers. Before the 1980s and the menacing threat of permanent replacement that the Reagan administration had unleashed during the 1981 PATCO strike, companies were reluctant to take on unions so directly as to challenge their very jobs. Unions and workers, in turn, felt no need to alter long-standing collective activities that had worked for them. Though essentially liberal and innovative in its politics, the UAW was rather conservative and unwavering in its labor-relations tactics. In sum, as long as the scaffolding of labor-relations and shop-floor power between the union and company, and within the union itself, held steady, the UAW and its members had no urgent need to rethink basic labor-relations strategies. Since international unionism did not galvanize Caterpillar workers, it is necessary to examine preexisting conditions on the shop floor, within Local 974, and in local communities to better understand what forces shaped working-class and local union perspectives.

The Limits of Contractualism

Despite significant degrees of control that the UAW exerted at Caterpillar, maintaining those gains was a constant struggle against management. A labor-management environment in

which foremen and supervisors exerted substantial leverage made strenuous physical labor even more demanding. In particular, management held and exercised considerable power regarding the organization and pace of production in ways that used workers' knowledge while often denying them control over, input in, and satisfaction from their work. For many workers, interactions with supervisors were daily reminders that, despite efforts to create a "more mature relationship between [the] Union and the Company," issues of power and authority continually pervaded shop-floor and labor relations.[58]

Contractualism operated more to mitigate the harshest effects of industrial relations than to eradicate that harshness which continued to be, even in the unionized era, workplace hazards, the rigorous pace of work and caustic supervision. Most jobs at Caterpillar were physically and mentally grueling. The process of manufacturing often very large units of earthmoving equipment burdened the body with heavy lifting, contorting one's torso for welds or the fastening of parts, and the persistent peril of injury—all in an often cramped, dirty, dangerous and noisy environment that was hot in the summer and cold in the winter. Retired worker Michael Legel described having "steel chips in my boots and fingers," as well as bandanas soaked with sweat that he would wring out. "Every drinking fountain had salt dispensers" to compensate for dehydration. Legel also suffered a partial loss of hearing in his right ear from working in the die room, where track links were pressed. Steve Frakes, a retired welder who crossed the picket line in 1992, recalled that sparks from his welding gun burned his exposed arms, neck, and face. The remedy was wearing long sleeves, even in the summer.[59]

---

[58] Remarks of Pat Greathouse, UAW Caterpillar Intra-Corporation Council Minutes, Chicago, IL, July 27-28, 1963, 3, UAW Ag-Imp 8-9-76, Accession #354, Box #2, ALUA-WSU.

[59] Michael Legel Interview, October 23, 2006, Tremont Public Library, Tremont, Illinois; Steve Frakes Interview at McDonald's, Morton, IL, November 14, 2006. All nineteen current and retired workers whom I have interviewed thus far remarked on the extremes of heat and cold in Caterpillar factories, especially before a few areas of their factories were air conditioned. Not unlike the reference in David Montgomery's *The Fall of the House of Labor* to iron puddlers and rollers who needed to remove their boots to *pour the perspiration out of them,"* (18, emphasis in

Workers frequently complained to their union representatives about being harassed by supervisors, or refused opportunities to go to first aid until a relief worker came to take their place to continue production. Shop stewards resented management's refusal grievances to settle outstanding grievances, forcing cases to pile up and go to arbitration.

An especially pernicious power that foremen utilized was the ability to "job-fail" workers for failure to maintain either proper quality or quantity standards. If workers failed to meet pre-determined production quotas, or if their work resulted in too much unusable product or "scrap," foremen had the capacity to "job-fail" people. This would result in their being bumped down to lower-rated and lower-paying jobs. Those without the seniority to bump into lower-rated positions faced possible unemployment during slow periods if they failed to adequately perform a job.[60] All current and retired employees interviewed cited this managerial authority as a humbling threat for workers, which the company wielded frequently.

Employees bristled at the "job-fail" authority foremen held because of its wide-ranging consequences. More senior people who were job-failed could bump less-senior people out of their jobs, resulting in displaced workers continuing to bump down the seniority and production lines, or being laid off themselves. This fractured cohesive work groups and friendships, causing resentment toward the job-failed worker. These moves also meant that people moving into new jobs usually knew and performed them less efficiently than those whom they replaced, disrupting work flow and incurring the wrath of the most aggressive foremen, or "bird dogs,"[61] who hounded workers to keep production high. Job-failing could also prevent workers from

---

text), Caterpillar workers unfailingly mentioned sweating profusely in the heat, and the constant din of noise, of the factories.

[60] Legel Interview; Wayne Schmidt Interview at his home, Pekin, Il., January 10, 2007.

[61] Union flyers and newsletters from the 1950s through the 1970s often used this term for the most demanding foremen. See for example "COLD FACTS," 2/11/68, UAW Ag-Imp 8/9/76, Local 974 1967 Delegates Election File, ALUA-WSU.

transferring jobs or garnering overtime outside of their regular classifications. If workers felt that they knew enough about a different job to work on it, they could petition management to judge their work on the basis that they could do it without being trained. If they were deemed capable of performing these extra jobs, workers opened up opportunities to work overtime or avoid layoffs, while being job-failed closed those doors.[62]

Steve Frakes asserted that foremen often made qualification decisions arbitrarily, using the threat of job-failing workers—especially against people apt to resist foremen—to keep production high, but also to keep less-senior and lower paid people. Management also created pace-setters to squeeze out extra production, and then pressure the others to in turn produce more. Frakes explains it as follows:

> It created a lot of hard feelings within the rank-and-file of the UAW because here on one hand you maybe had a guy that was producing ten pieces a night…and you have one individual who's producing twelve or thirteen…because then the supervisor's coming down and looking at the rest of these guys going, 'Well if he can do it, how come you can't?' Never mind that they had production standards…that said that ten was supposed to be right.[63]

In addition to disagreeing with *how* management wielded its authority to judge their abilities, workers' also resented *who* made these decisions, especially managers without an industrial background. Though workers generally knew their jobs far better than management, even those who had been plucked from production jobs, managers and engineers typically failed to heed their advice. Jim O'Connor said that for years the company failed to update its cards detailing proper production processes because it dismissed input from its employees. He referred to the shop floor as "definitely…a caste system…[T]hese people ignored you. It's like, 'You're

[62] Legel Interview; Frakes Interview. See also Central Agreement Between Caterpillar Tractor Co. and the UAW, December 15, 1979, Article 12—Job Openings, 63-66, ILIR, Box 15, Folder 6, UIA.
[63] Frakes Interview; Legel Interview.

beneath us. How dare you even approach us?' We were the shop rats and they were the elite."[64] Beginning in the 1970s, Caterpillar promoted fewer production workers to management and instead hired college-educated managers. They might have had degrees in business administration, but they lacked the necessary knowledge for industrial production. Frakes worked for two different "educated idiots" who had degrees in philosophy and lumber management, respectively. While working in machine repair, Mike Legel recalled that when he tried explaining to a general foreman why a machine was down, the foreman responded, "'You guys do whatever it is you have to do to get that machine running. I have a degree in horticulture. I have no clue what you're talking about."[65]

Additionally, resolution through the grievance procedure usually involved delayed justice, if justice was realized at all. In a contractualist system of company action and union reaction, workers seeking recourse for disciplinary issues could wait weeks or months before the dispute was resolved, while unresolved grievances taken to arbitration could take anywhere between several months to a year or two before an arbitrator rendered a decision. The grievance system provided measures of power to workers and the union, but did not abrogate management's authority to act first. Nor did it assure victory, or come cheaply. Settling grievances or pursuing arbitration cases proved expensive for both sides, particularly through legal fees. If Caterpillar lost an arbitration case, it may be required to make financial restitution to a worker or group of workers. For the union, however, lost grievances and arbitration cases not only meant no financial recompense, but also money spent and lost on staff and legal fees.

As a result, it was not uncommon for workers to avoid utilizing the grievance system altogether, pursuing instead forms of resistance by flying below the radar of management. In

[64] O'Connor Interview.
[65] Frakes Interview; Legel Interview.

both the skilled or semi-skilled occupations, employees attuned to the rhythms and vagaries of industrial life sought to use the uniquely intricate knowledge they gained to temper the grind of the factory, for example by meeting production quotas before the end of the day to extend their rest period. Workers also resorted to more surreptitious methods of combating management's speedup efforts by using their knowledge of the production processes and machinery to curtail production. In July 1970, Cat fired Theodore Hartl, an automatic lathe operator, for sabotage. A note to a co-worker that a foreman had discovered revealed that Hartl had loosened screws to induce a breakdown on a new lathing machine after a time study on it had resulted in higher production standards for the operators.[66]

More often, workers simply sought escape from the harsh and often stultifying regimen rather than directly confront managerial power. Absenteeism was endemic, and violators of the company's "AWOL Rule," covering employees who failed to either report to work or notify the company of their absence for three days, were fired. Still others avoided the grind of the factory while at work, carving out personal time and space within the vast confines of Caterpillar's sprawling factories. Workers, particularly those on second and third shifts, escaped work by leaving for breaks and lunch early, and hiding in not-so-plain sight in the locker rooms, bathrooms, and the nooks and crannies of less frequented areas of the company's complexes. In one extreme example Harley Bantz, a millwright on third shift, was fired for keeping what can only be called a small but functional apartment at work in a remote corner of East Peoria's Building CC. Plant security and a manager discovered that workers had assembled "beds…fashioned out of company boxes and materials, sex magazines and literature under private lock and key in a shop desk, numerous foodstuffs…radios, a hot plate, a coffeemaker, a

[66] Arbitration Award, Case No. PA-71-P-007. Theodore Hartl, 1-3, Agricultural Implement (Caterpillar), Lot #6, Box 5, Arbitration Award, Case No. PA-88-P-007, Discharge-Eads, ALUA-WSU.

blanket, bottles of distilled water, cushions, a tub made into a refrigerator, and a stainless steel oven."[67] It was not uncommon for workers, especially those working overnight, to sleep on the job. Two workers, Michael Bushell and Richard Bown, were fired for sleeping in the ersatz apartment that Bantz and others had fashioned for themselves. Retired worker David Williams acknowledged sleeping occasionally while working on third shift, saying, "I didn't have all these bigwigs and, about 5 o'clock you had to straighten your act up, you know. They started filtering in then."[68]

The International and Local 974 for the most part were in agreement about the need to confront management encroachments of power on the shop floor, even if they occasionally differed about the proper methods and degrees of resistance. However, issues of power between 974 and the International were often as bitterly contested as those between union and company.

Internecine Disputes

The UAW International's role in Peoria has alternated between its intruding in and being distant from Local 974's affairs. In turn, the International bristled at 974's propensity for independence from, and at times disregard toward, the parent organization. This occasionally adversarial relationship within the UAW created a climate of distrust that has persisted between the International and 974.

Tensions between the two came to a head in 1957 over allegations of elections improprieties within 974. The Local's March 5 elections for UAW Convention delegates prompted members to send "many telegrams and letters of protest…to President Reuther's

[67] Despite Bantz's fourteen years seniority with Caterpillar, which permanent arbitrator Elliott Goldstein usually considered in disciplinary cases, the company's firing of Bantz was upheld. Arbitration Award, Case No. GS-87-P-004, Harley Bantz, 2, UAW Agricultural Implement (Caterpillar), Lot #6, Box #3, ALUA-WSU.

[68] Bushell's termination was upheld in arbitration, while Bown received his job back with full seniority, but with no back pay; Arbitration Award, Case Nos. GS-87-P-005, Richard Bown and GS-87-P-006, Michael Bushell, 1-5, 15, Agricultural Implement (Caterpillar), Lot #6, Box 4, ALUA-WSU; David Williams Interview at his home, Peoria, Il., November 21, 2006.

office," according to the testimony of Don Rand, UAW Credentials Committee member. An International investigation found that "[b]allots were found in ballot boxes where they did not rightfully belong," with "boxes [that] were opened by unauthorized persons." The investigation determined that local election watchers affiliated with an ex-officer entered the election hall and disrupted the vote count. Compounding matters, local media reports charged two members with ballot-box stuffing and election improprieties. In response to these reports, protests from Local 974 members, and its own investigation, the International Executive Board ordered Local 974's officers to hold the elections results. The local officers refused.[69]

The International responded angrily, not only because of the perceived effrontery of the Local officers, but also because of the national political context. The Senate's McClellan Committee had begun investigations into allegations of racketeering within the labor movement. While it focused primarily on the Teamsters, the McClellan Committee later scrutinized the UAW's actions during its fierce strike against the Kohler Company in which stewards sent from Detroit beat up Kohler scabs, resulting in a memorable exchange between Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AR) and President Reuther during Reuther's three-day testimony in March 1958.[70] To potentially make matters worse for the UAW, a member of Local 974's Executive Board contacted the McClellan Committee accusing the UAW International of "being in the same category as the Teamsters." UAW Secretary Emil Mazey, who feared the possibility of negative press and resented the comparison with the Teamsters he considered "a disgrace to the labor movement," excoriated Local 974's officers.

---

[69] Proceedings of Special Session of UAW International Executive Board, May 3, 1957, 3-4, 12-14, UAW IEB, Box #11, ALUA-WSU.

[70] Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 347; Rick Perlstein, *Before The Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 37-41. For more about Goldwater and his anti-union proclivities, see Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, "Origins of the Conservative Ascendancy: Barry Goldwater's Early Senate Career and the De-legitimization of Organized Labor," *Journal of American History* Vol. 95 No. 3 (December 2008), 678-709.

> You fellows play your politics pretty dirty and you play them pretty rough…These headlines are headlines that enemies of the labor movement are very glad to see. They couldn't have done a better job themselves.[71]

The International removed all but two of Local 974's officers and placed 974 under trusteeship in 1957.[72]

The rancor between Local 974 and the International continued to fester near the end of the eighteen-month trusteeship in which the International directly ran 974. Ray Canty, former recording secretary of 974 who was removed from office in 1957 and suspended for three years, led an unsuccessful movement of East Peoria plant employees to disaffiliate from the UAW and form an independent union, the Independent Industrial Workers of America. This particularly angered the International because Canty formed this group during contract negotiations with Caterpillar. Around the same time, members of the independent union movement distributed anti-UAW leaflets at the company's Aurora, IL factory—during a UAW organizing drive there against the IAM. One leaflet attacked Ag-Imp director Pat Greathouse, who was administering Local 974, as "a Walter Reuther yes man…from Detroit" and a "dictator."[73]

Consequently, the International closely followed the Local's politics from without and, according to 974 members, within. As one of the largest locals in the entire union, by far the largest in the UAW Ag-Imp department,[74] securing the support of and working with Local 974's leaders was crucial for the election of regional directors. Consequently, the International attempted to shape the course of events within Local 974 and to elect officer candidates it

[71] Proceedings, UAW IEB, May 3, 1957, 69-70, ALUA-WSU.
[72] Proceedings, UAW IEB, May 3, 1957, 77-85, ALUA-WSU.
[73] Proceedings of Regular Session of IEB, February 5, 1959, 211-222, UAW IEB, Box #12, ALUA-WSU. The UAW initiated an investigation of Canty and other suspended UAW members to charge them with "dual unionism."
[74] For example, in 1969 Local 974 had 17,948 active members, while nine other UAW locals at Cat had 10,512 combined. Caterpillar Council Meeting Minutes, Toronto, Ontario, September 26, 1969, 2, UAW Ag-Imp, 8/9/76, Accession #354, Box #2, ALUA-WSU.

favored. According to Jim O'Connor, president of 974 from 1980 to 1983, it was an open secret that the International played a prominent role in shaping the Local's internal politics:

> Our local represented a huge amount of voting strength at the conventions, and the regional director at the time, Robert Johnson, was notorious—if one political caucus in this local 974 got strong, [for] interject[ing] staff and money into the other organizations. [H]e could raise money from his own staff. 974 was always treated differently than Decatur or Aurora or any of the smaller units. They pretty much appreciated the International and everything the International did for them. Down here, when you got elected, you understood that the International had been involved in your local union politics.[75]

The International's role in 974's politics and the perception that 974's officers were subservient to the International were frequently used against candidates during hotly contested elections. Election flyers throughout the 1960s criticized incumbents for allegedly failing to stand up to Ag-Imp Director Pat Greathouse and Region 4 head Robert Johnson, characterizing Local interests as divergent from "Detroit." During the race for Local president, B. J. "Bill" Short ridiculed his opponents, C. L. "Curt" Martin and George Eisfelder, for being "Greathouse Yes Men." According to Short, Martin, who was president during the 1964 negotiations and strike at CAT, "let Greathouse call the shots—Martin let Greathouse go on T.V. telling the workers to go back to work before the contract was ratified." The loyalties of Eisfelder, president during the 1967 round of negotiations and subsequent strike, were suspect according to Short's flyer because he "Rubber Stamped anything Pat Greathouse want[ed]."[76]

---

[75] Jim O'Connor Interview, December 18, 2006 at his home, Marquette Heights, Illinois. According to O'Connor, the International supported his opponent, R.L. "Bob" Davidson, in O'Connor's unsuccessful 1978 bid for the 974 presidency. O'Connor lost the election, 6,451 votes to 5,003, Memo from Clifton, Gunderson and Co. to Local 974, May 17, 1978, UAW President's Office Douglas Fraser, Box #41, File #20 Local 974 1977-80, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University—hereafter DF ALUA-WSU. 974 Elections flyers in the 1960s also make frequent references to the International providing financial assistance to certain political factions within Local 974. See for example B.E. "Barney" Huston, "Local 974 History" flyer, UAW Ag-Imp 8/9/76, Box 10, 1965 Elections Publicity File, ALUA-WSU.

[76] B. J. "Bill" Short Slate, "A NEW BROOM SWEEPS CLEAN," UAW Ag-Imp, Box 10, 1969 Local 974 Elections File, ALUA-WSU. Short was elected president of 974 in 1969, on a platform emphasizing local issues he claimed his opponents and Greathouse ignored. Short vaguely claimed that Martin and Eisfelder, working with Greathouse during negotiations, failed to strengthen contract language on grievances, and also asserted that they failed to win

Yet it would be inaccurate to characterize the Local as easily dominated by the International. Letters from Local 974 officers to Pat Greathouse and his staff prior to the 1979 negotiations reveal a deep distrust of upper-level staff, whom 974's Claude Turman termed "very rude" and "very unprofessional…Your staff members fail to follow through with grievance information for the employees." The 974 bargaining committee co-signed a missive to Greathouse castigating long-time UAW representative Marshall Hughes as "an effective liar" for his handling of grievances concerning a snow day, when the company closed their factories. Reminding Greathouse of "the hundreds of thousands of dollars this Local Union sends Detroit annually," the committee asked, "if your primary function is not to give good, prompt, courteous advice to our Membership, then we should know what it is you're supposed to be doing."[77]

In these negotiations, 974 officials were upset that John Deere, and not Caterpillar, was chosen to set the standard for pattern bargaining that set the stage for an eighty-day strike that the International refused to authorize, denying strikers vital strike pay. Despite this, 974 workers stayed out and won, illustrating both strong local cohesion and the ability to beat the company without the International's financial assistance.[78] During pre-strike negotiations, Greathouse expressed frustrations to the International Executive Board in his dealings with Local 974's bargaining team.

> "You got a total of thirty-five people on the committee, and eighteen of them come from that Peoria local. So when you have a problem, they go off and have a caucus, come back and vote as a bloc, and tell what the policy of the committee is going to be. From the beginning, they set out that they were going to completely rewrite the agreement and

---

sufficient economic gains in 1964 and 1967. See B.J. "Bill" Short Union Builders flyer, circa March 1968, and "Greathouse's Sell-Out," UAW Ag-Imp 8/9/76, Box 10, Local 974 1967 Delegates Election File, ALUA-WSU.

[77] Letter from Local 974 Bargaining Committee to Pat Greathouse, 6/1/79, Letter from Claude Turman, Morton Division Chairman to Pat Greathouse, 6/4/79, DF, Box 41, File 19, ALUA-WSU.

[78] Derber, *Labor in Illinois*, 306; Letters between Aron Tucker, Local 974 Member and President Douglas Fraser, 10/12/79 and 10/16/79, DF, Box 41, File 19, ALUA-WSU.

> told the company from the opening day: 'Come October 1, if we haven't got a contract the way we want it, we are going to shut the plant down.'[79]

Among the outstanding issues during the 1979-1980 strike was Caterpillar's974 workers won this provision in 1976 through direct action applied on their own bargaining team. David Williams, who had worked in the Mapleton foundry in the 1970s, recounted organizing a picket of third-shift foundry workers at the Hotel Pere Marquette in downtown Peoria, where Cat and the UAW held negotiations in 1976, demanding the 25-and-out provision. Only after a personal telephone call from Greathouse, assuring him that he would insist upon 25-and-out, did Williams and other foundry workers relent.[80]

The union's amalgamated structure that incorporated Caterpillar's diffuse factories in and around Peoria exacerbated this intensely political climate within 974 that Tony Green, president of Local 974 from 1984-1990, has termed a "political whorehouse."[81] For officer and steward elections, 974 was divided into seven units that at times combined workers from various local factories into one unit, but primarily isolated them by the particular shops in which they worked. For example, skilled trades people in all factories were in one unit, and another was comprised of workers from numerous shops such as the Technical Center (where many skilled and semi-skilled workers conducted experimental work on prototype units and parts), Proving Grounds (where equipment testing occurred), Basic Engine, and several warehouses. However, most other Units were subdivided strictly by shop.[82] Such compartmentalization served to isolate workers, localizing their particular conditions and political factions instead of facilitating connections

[79] Proceedings of Regular Session, International Executive Board, United Auto Workers, November 12, 1979, 62, UAW IEB, Box 23, ALUA-WSU.
[80] David Williams Interview.
[81] Green Interview.
[82] See for example the detailed breakdown of Units and delegates by shop for Local 974 in *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 32, No. 9, May 11, 1984, 4-5, 8. These listings routinely appeared in the Local's newspaper during their Spring elections.

between workers in other shops. According to Jim O'Connor, candidates for union office found it difficult to make inroads outside their own shop. Former Publicity and Education Director Wayne Schmidt reflected that 974's intensely competitive political climate "probably turned a lot of people off…Outgoing officers never helped incoming people with how to handle problems or laying out precedents" for their successors to follow, opening them up to criticism later for doing a bad job in office.[83]

It is against this fractious backdrop that the UAW, and to a lesser degree Local 974, encountered and confronted global production. The emergence of global production ultimately revealed divergent priorities that the International and local held in a rapidly evolving industrial landscape. In the process, a chasm widened between the two parts of the union that ultimately produced destructive, if delayed, consequences.

Some members, like much of the Peoria community, were likely turned off by the Union's often adversarial relationship with Caterpillar that produced not only regular strikes at the end of contracts, but also occasional wildcat strikes and work stoppages over speedups in the 1960s and 1970s. Peoria and the surrounding counties were rather conservative politically, regularly sending Republican legislators to state and federal office and voting, often overwhelmingly, for Republican presidential candidates throughout the postwar period.[84] Within this Republican stronghold, it is reasonable to conclude that unions, firmly entrenched within the Democratic Party since the 1930s, had their detractors within Caterpillar's factory walls as well

[83] O'Connor Interview; Schmidt Interview. Precedents signify changes in workplace rules and practices resulting from agreements between the union and company, settled grievances, or arbitration decisions rendered by an administrative law judge (ALJ). These were significant because they often altered long-standing rules, and required careful tracking by each side to be correctly followed and implemented. With turnover within both management and the union staff, accurately implementing precedents could prove difficult.

[84] Howard W. Allen and Vincent A. Lacey, eds., *Illinois Elections, 1818-1990: Candidates and County Returns for President, Governor, Senate, and House of Representatives* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992). Republican presidential candidates fared particularly well in Peoria and Tazewell Counties, with Dwight Eisenhower in 1952 and 1956, Richard Nixon in 1972, and Ronald Reagan in 1980 winning overwhelming majorities.

as the surrounding communities. When Local 974 struck over increased production standards and unresolved job classification issues in 1964, it prompted letters from the community criticizing the Union for "bickering like recalcitrant children," and for causing people "psychological frustrations." Among these, one letter anonymously signed "A Cat. worker on strike, acknowledged that "some jobs are timed too high," but also criticized "some 'goldbricks' who resist giving an honest days work." [Sic.] The anonymous "worker in the shop" opined that the Union overstepped its parameters by demand[ing]…how much they were willing to do for a day's pay, and conducting a strike "the majority of workers are [not] in agreement with."[85]

Anti-communism, to be sure, shaped the politics of workers and UAW Local 974 in Peoria. Scarcely the bailiwick of either liberals or conservatives during the Cold War, anti-communist fervor was nonetheless an important element that the company, its employees, and Local 974 shared. The International was stridently anti-communist, and trumpeted greater domestic productivity an effective tool to forestall the growth of communism in third-world nations, arguing for an exchange of American finished products for raw materials from resource-abundant but "under-developed countries." It framed its assistance to unions and workers abroad, such as French miners and Turkish metalworkers, within a stridently anti-communist context, justifying international aid for workers as a "positive answer to communist subversion which seeks to exploit poverty and social injustice."[86] Local union publications reinforced anti-communist sentiment through political cartoons. One such sketch in *UAW Local 974 News* framed patriotism, anti-communism, and freedom in overtly masculine terms by displaying a

[85] Carl E. Andres Letter to the Editor, "Strikes Are Departure From Reason," Robert L. Esch Letter to the Editor, "Workers Want Chance to Participate," A Cat. worker on strike, "Strike Needs Outside Arbitration," *Peoria Journal-Star*, April 22, 1964, copies obtained from UAW Ag-Imp 8/9/76, Box 11, L. 974 #3 File, ALUA-WSU. For similar sentiments from a UAW member during the 1979 strike, see anonymous letter from "A frightened UAW member female, divorced and trying to bring three kids up (with no job)" to Douglas Frazier [Sic.], October 12, 1979, DF, Box 41, File 19, ALUA-WSU.

[86] "Defense Fund Helps French, Turkish Strikers," *UAW Solidarity*, Vol. 7, No. 5, May, 1963, 13; "UAW in the World Community," *UAW Solidarity*, Vol. 9, No. 2, February 1964, 34-35.

construction worker direction a crane, with "U.S.A." marked on its side, toward the completion of a building with "A FREE AND PEACEFUL WORLD" written on its roof. The worker's face expressed urgency in this endeavor, with an ominous storm cloud with the Soviet hammer and sickle insignia on its facade hovering over the nearly-completed structure.[87]

Despite their history of disagreements, Local 974 and the International shared common ground regarding anti-communism. Local 974 remained hawkish over the Vietnam War throughout the 1960s long after other unionists and much of the US had soured on the war. Local president "Doc" Harwood, whose son was serving in Vietnam in 1967, penned an open letter to his son in the local's paper assuring him that despite the difficulty inherent in his duties as a soldier, Harwood had faith that his son's experiences would "make you a better American, a better man and a more enthusiastic member of the U.A.W. than you can, at this time imagine."[88] Ralph Aleshire suggested several ideas intended to hasten the end of the Vietnam War, and alter the scope of the draft that disproportionately affected working-class men. He advocated using "the most powerful weapons at our disposal"—presumably nuclear weapons—against North Vietnam "to destroy as much of their country as possible, if they do not call for an immediate peace conference and begin negotiations." Appearing to target college students who were exempt from the draft, Aleshire proposed revising the draft "to include ALL between the ages of 18 and 26 (who have not already) who hold or are able to hold a civilian job."[89]

Expressions of animosity from 974 members toward America's youth were commonplace, especially excoriating them for a lack of patriotism and a lack of respect for their

[87] "World Crisis Warning," *UAW Local 974 News*, August 9, 1961, Vol. 11, No. 35, 1, Unbound Newspapers Collection, Box 160, UAW 974 file ALUA-WSU.
[88] "Most Veteran Benefits Are Tax Free," *UAW Local 974 News*, March 22, 1967, 2; N. "Doc" Harwood, "To Our Men in Service," *UAW Local 974 News*, April 12, 1967, 8, Unbound Newspapers Collection, Box 160, UAW 974 file, ALUA-WSU;
[89] Ralph Aleshire, "The Viet Nam Mess…Cause and Cure," *UAW Local 974 News*, March 22, 1967, 2, Unbound Newspapers Collection, Box 160, UAW 974 file, ALUA-WSU, emphasis in the original.

elders. Doc Harwood thanked a Bradley University business professor for inviting him to speak before a class about unions and collective bargaining in 1969. Clearly juxtaposing the students with the stereotype of the "unwashed hippie" at this time, Harwood's characterizations of the class's appearance and demeanor place him—and likely others within 974—squarely among those at the time who became more politically conservative over the social unrest of the 1960s. After the class, Harwood was pleased to report that each of the "40 young men…was properly groomed and their manners were above reproach," with nary a trace of "smart aleck punks in the crowd." The caliber of young men in the class reassured him that he would "never need to worry about America."[90]

In the postwar years, the Local's leaders participated in labor education programs through the Peoria Social Action Institute's Labor School that fused social justice and anti-communism in a curriculum for area activists. Founded in 1942, the Labor School sought to develop a "properly informed citizenry to ward off dangers" such as "communism…a constant threat" "from within as well as from beyond" the country. Classes ranged from labor history to labor law to public speaking. One in particular, "Christian Social Principles," was taught by Monsignor Robert Peters of Peoria's diocese, and it emphasized topics such as "human dignity," "workers' right to organize," and "Communism: what's wrong with it?"[91] While non-denominational, the School appears to have been designed to appeal to Peoria's sizeable Catholic population. Yet the Local appealed to other denominations, particularly in its newspaper which routinely published religious sermons and articles from local and regional ministers. These tracts

[90] N. 'Doc" Harwood, "My Thanks to Bradley University," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 17, No. 7, April 9, 1969, 1. See also Miller, "Things to Know," 4. See also Perlstein, *Nixonland*, 176-180, 208-213, for similarly dismissive expressions toward youth culture.

[91] "A Labor School for ALL Wage Earners," and "Education: The Key to Industrial Peace" pamphlets, Peoria Social Action Institute Labor School, Labor-Management Relations Studies Collection, Directors Office, Series 22/1/15, Box 19, 1950 Census Report and Pamphlets Folder, UIA. Thanks to Toby Higbie for bringing this to my attention.

downplayed class differences and conflict, instead emphasizing salvation through personal redemption and individual acceptance of Christ as one's savior. The overarching message from these articles was of an individual's responsibility for one's own actions, good or ill, and opportunities for success through personal uplift. As Lisa McGirr has shown, this refrain overlapped with social and religious conservatism that arose on the political right in the 1960s and 1970s.[92]

Locals' newspapers throughout the 1960s regularly contained advertisements for U.S. savings bonds that urged the membership to plug its steadily rising wages back into the federal government to sustain programs for "education, family security, retirement and many other worthwhile causes." The savings bond program was touted as more than a safe investment for workers, but as "a multi-billion-dollar insurance policy on our way of life. Americans who wisely invest in these bonds are betting that our system is the best system." Images of George Washington, the American flag, and men hard at work supplemented the patriotic rhetoric in order to invoke nationalistic pride among potential bond buyers.[93]

The frequency with which locals' publications addressed issues affecting both veterans and soldiers on active duty suggests that patriotic imagery and rhetoric resonated strongly with UAW members. Local 974 routinely published columns offering advice to veterans about benefits to which they and their families were entitled, how and whether or not to report income and benefits with the Internal Revenue Service, and how to ensure benefits for families of deceased veterans. More importantly, the issue of returning veterans was deemed sufficiently important for the union and company to negotiate contract clauses allowing workers away on

[92] Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 240-254.
[93] See "That's A Fact," *UAW Local 974 News*, November 24, 1964, 5, and May 10, 1967, 3, Unbound Newspapers Collection, Box 160, UAW 974 file, ALUA-WSU for two of many examples in locals' publications.

military duty to continue to accrue seniority as would an active employee.[94] While statistical information is episodic, it is clear that many Cat workers were veterans, while others were on active duty during the late 1960s. Local 974 officials reported in 1970 that "about 1,000" workers were on leave, including "Military" and "Medical Leave."[95]

Cat workers served in the military for various reasons. For many, there was the sense of masculine patriotism that Harwood articulated above, with military service acting as a rite of passage to manhood for young men. Others such as Jerry Brown figured that being drafted was inevitable, and joined to "get it out of the way." Some were drafted, including Fred Williams, although both he and Brown served in Europe during the Vietnam War. Both Brown and Williams cited an inability to afford college as a reason for performing industrial work and working-class Americans usually lacked the deferments that college students received, subjecting them to the draft and combat duty in Vietnam in disproportionate numbers.[96] In addition to fervent patriotism and anti-communism on the home front, wartime experiences, the horrors of combat, and class shaped working-class perspectives on war, the Vietnamese and, for those who served in World War Two and Korea, the Japanese and Koreans respectively.

According to John Martin Willis, soldiers from neighborhoods with median annual family incomes below $5,000 were four times likelier to die in combat in Vietnam than those from areas with average incomes over $15,000.[97] They were most often subjected to violence which, in Vietnam, reached catastrophic depths due to the unparalleled and often indiscriminate

---

[94] Brown Interview.
[95] UAW Caterpillar Intra-Corporation Council Local 974 Report, May 22, 1970, UAW Ag-Imp. 8-9-76, Box 2, UAW Caterpillar Intra-Corporation Council Minutes File, ALUA-WSU. While the report did not differentiate between military and medical leave, it is reasonable to determine that, during this era of a draft, a considerable portion of the roughly 1,000 workers on leave were in the military.
[96] Brown Interview; Fred Williams Interview, December 14, 2006 at his home, Peoria, IL; Christian G. Appy, *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 28-31.
[97] John Martin Willis, "Who Died In Vietnam: An Analysis of the Social Background of Vietnam War Casualties," (Ph.D. Diss.: Purdue University, 1975), cited in Appy, *Working-Class War*, 12, 324 fn 2.

use of ordnance, chemical and biological agents, and the guerrilla tactics the National Liberation Front used. The frustrating style of guerrilla combat, pervasive violence, and a climate of racism toward the Vietnamese led to widespread atrocities extending far beyond My Lai in March 1968, in which perhaps 500 women, children, and old men were slaughtered.[98] In sum, those who served in war witnessed horrors and violence that most of their friends and family would never knew, before returning home.

Combat in Vietnam produced numerous responses—disillusionment with the government and authority generally, depression, prolonged trauma, antiwar resistance, and sympathy for the Vietnamese. It also fomented in some an intense resentment of and racism toward the Vietnamese during and after the war, especially those who saw friends die in combat. Arthur Egendorf's study of returning veterans found that 32 percent of white soldiers admitted negative feelings toward the Vietnamese, compared to only 9 percent of black veterans.[99] It is important not to draw conclusions too broadly about war, racism, and veterans, for racism is neither an inevitable nor a permanent byproduct of war. Nor is it innate to working-class soldiers or people. Rather, soldiers, particularly working-class soldiers, were subjected to a form of globalization disassociated from everyday society. This globalization through war experiences produced negative results such as resentment and racism, hewed by the horrors of war that, for some, etched negative and durable impressions of 'others' into their outlook. Many soldiers who returned home to stable jobs in factory towns never left. In nearly all-white communities in the Peoria area, there were not racially diverse populations with which workers could interact. Industrial work in stable industries such as heavy machinery thus produced a degree of stability

[98] Appy, *Working-Class War*, 5, 128-129, 166-167, 214-216, 273-277.
[99] Ibid., 224-225, 293; Arthur Egendorf et al., *Legacies of Vietnam: Comparative Adjustments of Veterans and Their Peers* (Washington, DC: United States Government Office, 1981), 392, cited in Appy, 225, 337 fn 41. For a good examination of the lasting impact of World War Two on racial attitudes, see John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993).

that rooted many workers to their communities and their jobs. Yet as chapter three will discuss, some drew upon their wartime experiences to respond to uncertain socioeconomic times with militaristic rhetoric, demonizing the burgeoning industrial rival Japan in ways reminiscent of World War Two.

Conclusion

For much of the postwar period, the UAW's focus on contractualism proved a sturdy defense against corporate efforts to roll back the union's power, and an effective means to extract concessions from Cat on wages, benefits, and working conditions. Yet it enmeshed local unions in a seemingly endless series of contractual battles with the company over issues such as productivity, work assignments, and disciplinary actions. This refracted the union's focus toward resolving local disputes rather than tackling new, distant ones such as the globalization of production. Workers' strong local and nationalist identities also shaped their strategies and perspectives as Cat globalized its operations. On the one hand, company hiring practices that relied upon family ties for new employees fostered an impressive and durable cohesion on the shop floor. This facilitated resistance to speed ups, and protected the elaborate system of job classifications that prevented Cat from unilaterally eliminating jobs. On the other hand, these practices excluded many local citizens along racial and gender lines, limiting the potential allies locally available to the union.

Yet global trade soon brought global workforces, creating the potential for competition among international workers for industrial labor, and job and subsequently membership losses for the UAW. Crucially, global production at Cat took root as the interests and priorities of the UAW International and Local 974 often diverged, with the International grappling with global production and the Local enmeshed in local disputes. Until the early 1980s, local union officials

and members frequently clashed with its representatives and the International union itself over bargaining strategies and internal politics, producing a climate of distrust between the local and International. Moreover, the growth of 974 into a large and effective, but diffuse, local union also entrenched an impersonal bureaucracy on the shop floor, limiting its effectiveness.

During the 1970s, as imports foreign competition challenged the supremacy of American companies, the UAW made overtures toward international union solidarity as it reconsidered its long-standing belief that productivity gains at home could aid people abroad, slowly shifting toward limited protectionism. Ultimately, however, its fell back on the trust it held in traditional tactics of solidarity, and a faith in the relatively top-heavy union apparatus that fed and supported that approach to labor relations. How these efforts unfolded, and how they shaped the responses of the company, union, and its members in the face of America's emerging economic crisis illustrated the political, philosophical, and organizational weakness of organized labor in the late twentieth century.

Chapter 3: The Death of Contractualism: Labor Relations, Nationalism, and Race in the Era of Deindustrialization

The 1980s were bleak times for American industrial workers. Shuttered factories pockmarked their formerly vibrant industrial cities, throwing hundreds of thousands of workers—mostly men—out of work and into crowded unemployment offices. Factory towns in Illinois such as Peoria, Decatur, and Aurora, where Caterpillar was one of the largest if not *the* largest employer, were particularly vulnerable, with thousands of layoffs at Caterpillar crippling local economies. People who had held the same jobs for years were not just unemployed, but lacked alternatives for good-paying, often unionized factory jobs. Elegies to desperate working people and dying industrial centers became increasingly popular, with Billy Joel's "Allentown" reaching number 17 on the Billboard Hot 100 songs in 1982, and John Cougar Mellencamp's "Rain on the Scarecrow" elevating to number 21 in 1986.[1] As consumers, people saw that imports ranging from automobiles, electronics, and clothing dominated or made significant inroads into the domestic economy, eliminating many American-made goods.[2] There were many reasons why American workers, businesses, and the national economy reeled by the 1980s—America's Cold War macroeconomic policy, the rise of foreign competitors, the crippling double burden of stagnant economic growth and rising inflation. Yet for many, who were long accustomed to the reliability of steady employment but suddenly wracked by financial insecurity and fear about the future, the first target for their blame and resentment was also one of the most distant—the Japanese.

---

[1] Joel Whitburn, *Top Pop Singles, 1955-1986* (Menomonee Falls, WI: Record Research, 1987), 266, 475, quoted in George Lipsitz, "Dilemmas of Beset Nationhood: Patriotism, the Family, and Economic Change in the 1970s and 1980s," in John Bodnar ed., *Bonds of Affection: Americans Define Their Patriotism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 264.

[2] Barry Bluestone and Irving Bluestone, *Negotiating the Future: A Labor Perspective on American Business* (NY: Basic Books, 1992), 61-64, chart on 63; Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the US Working Class* (London: Verso, 1986), 235-240, chart on 238.

Enraged by the federal government's trade policies that failed to curtail the unfair "dumping" of "Jap Junk" into America, retiree Bill Martin and laid-off member Jim Bishop wrote an open letter to local Congressman Robert Michel. With an intense hostility depicting international economic competition as war, Martin and Bishop fumed, "You people in Washington are trading our $10 and $12 an hour jobs for jobs below the poverty level…I see our homeland being bought up by foreigners…I fought the Japs in WW2 and I know you fought this war also. Doesn't it make you angry at what these Japs are doing to us? If you think I'm coming down hard on the Japs, you're right. I think they are a bunch of two-faced, lying, back-stabbing bunch of slimes, and if we turn our backs on them, they'll cut our throats…They take care of their own and the hell with everybody else…Remember, they were in our Congress talking peace while they were bombing Pearl Harbor."[3]

Although this slur-laden letter was the most overtly hostile and militaristic piece that *Local 974 News* published at this time, it was far from the only one to discuss trade policy, international competition, Japan, or foreigners in general. In fact, such pieces routinely appeared within the monthly newspaper's pages, often several in an issue during the mid-1980s. Articles emphasizing foreign competition, the need to reassert the dominance of American manufacturing, and anti-Japanese sentiment became more numerous at the same time that the UAW became more conciliatory toward Caterpillar and auto companies. *Local 974 News* stressed these themes at the same time that the union and Caterpillar implemented the Employee Satisfaction Process (ESP), a joint labor-management program designed to improve the company's competitive position, and resolve workplace conflicts without strikes or class-infused animosity.

[3] Bill Martin and Jim Bishop, "A Letter to Congressman Michel," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 33, No. 12, October 25, 1985, 3.

This signaled a decisive shift in labor relations between the UAW and Caterpillar, with each side touting ESP as a new and effective way to peacefully and jointly solve problems on the job. Ever since Caterpillar workers voted to join the UAW in 1948, relations between the union and the company had contentious at best, and ornery and militant at worst. The union routinely struck at Caterpillar with the expiration of every contract, including a 205-day strike in 1982-83 that until then had been the longest ever in the industry. Relations on the shop floor between workers and their immediate supervisors were frequently hostile, for years punctuated by heated arguments and wildcat strikes. What caused these two long-standing combatants to join forces and form collaborative, alternative work groups? What effects did joint labor-management, or "jointness," programs have on the workers and institutions involved at the company?

This chapter examines the shifting conditions and fortunes for working-class people in Caterpillar factories, and the towns in which they operated, during an era of tremendous socioeconomic flux. It argues that a convergence of fundamental changes in political economy, production strategies, shop floor life, and internal union politics in the 1970s and 1980s drastically undermined the Union's capacity to resist Caterpillar's concessionary demands of the 1990s. In particular, economic competition between it and its ascendant Japanese rival Komatsu, and the US and Japan in general, augmented workers' and companies' fears of America's economic decline in the late twentieth century. Caterpillar's full-scale adoption of lean production strategies such as downsizing, automation, and employee-involvement programs intersected with workers' fears of unemployment, deep-seated nationalism, frustrations with industrial life and stale bureaucratic unionism, and the rise of business-friendly leaders within the UAW. This confluence of aggressive corporate strategies, divisions among workers, nationalism, and union accommodation toppled essential elements of the contractualist

scaffolding that had protected workers, leaving the UAW divided, isolated, and vulnerable well before doing battle in the 1990s. The shop floor emerges as a vital site where class and national identities were formed and renegotiated as workers became increasingly enmeshed in global production and competition, and confronted with deindustrialization, in the late twentieth century.

Competition and Crisis at Cat: The Challenge of Komatsu

Until the end of the 1970s, as American companies in various industries lost both market share and profits while imports from foreign-owned companies rose, Caterpillar enjoyed prolonged profitability from its dominant global market share among the world's biggest manufacturers of earth-moving equipment. Long concerned about competition with foreign firms, the company nonetheless consistently sold more than half the total amount of earthmoving machinery purchased worldwide in the 1970s even as global demand for earth-moving equipment doubled.[4] By the end of the decade, however, Japanese manufacturer Komatsu emerged as Caterpillar's primary competitor in the industry—a shift indicating a growing trend in industries American companies had long dominated, the specter of which Caterpillar and American public alike found threatening.

Since it first began operations in 1921, Komatsu was a small business relative to other earthmoving machinery companies such as Caterpillar, International Harvester, J.I. Case, Bucyrus Erie, and others. With most of its sales in Japan, Komatsu found expansion difficult for

[4] Glenn Perusek, "Leadership and Opposition in the United Auto Workers," in Glenn Perusek and Kent Worcester eds., *Trade Union Politics: American Unions and Economic Change, 1960s-1990s* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1995), 174-176; Christopher A. Bartlett and U. Srinivasa Rangan, "Caterpillar Tractor Co.," Harvard Business School Case Study 9-385-276, 1985, revised September 12, 1988, 1; Bartlett and Rangan, "Komatsu Limited," Harvard Business School Case Study 9-385-277, revised September 12, 1988, 15, Exhibit 1; "Caterpillar Tractor Production," *Wall Street Journal*, February 18, 1975, 12; Harlan S. Byrne, "What Recession? A Leaping Caterpillar is a Wondrous Thing, Even Its Rivals Agree," *Wall Street Journal,* April 19, 1976, 1-2; Isaac Cohen, "The Caterpillar Labor Dispute and the UAW, 1991-1998," *Labor Studies Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Winter 2003), 80.

two main reasons—the pre-eminent position of its main competitors in most of the world, and the poor quality of its own products. Yet its fortunes changed for the better in 1963, when Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Investment (MITI) opened the earthmoving industry up to foreign investment. While MITI continued tariff protections for Japan's burgeoning auto and electronics industries, it did not consider earthmoving a field in which the nation's businesses held a long-term advantage over its foreign rivals. This decision to allow foreign investment provided tremendous capital and technological benefits to Komatsu, which quickly formed licensing agreements with American manufacturers International Harvester, Cummins, and Bucyrus Erie in product lines in which Caterpillar had a strong or the dominant share.[5] Harvester had developed good technology for its line of wheel loaders, which are small to large-sized tractors that run on wheels instead of tractor tracks, thus sacrificing some reliability in adverse conditions in favor of greater speed and maneuverability. Cummins was a leader in diesel engines generally used in heavy machinery. Bucyrus Erie had developed reliable excavators, which are small to large scoopers that remove considerable amounts of earth at a time, often for loading onto large trucks. Although these licensing agreements restricted Komatsu's capacity to export products built with licensed technologies to the US for seventeen years, they did allow the company to dominate Japan's domestic market despite Caterpillar's presence through a licensing agreement with Mitsubishi. Komatsu developed its first research and development department in 1966 to study and hone the application of its electrical engineering developments. By the mid-1970s, it had penetrated markets in Europe, the Middle East, and even North America much as Caterpillar had, by creating subsidiaries abroad that

[5] Wertheim and Co., "Caterpillar Tractor and the Earthmoving Equipment Industry," February 9, 1976, 3, 31-32, 34-36, 38-39; UAW Research Department Part 2, Box 93, File #15 Caterpillar 1976-1981, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University—hereafter UAW RD ALUA-WSU.

allowed the company to circumvent tariff payments.[6] Within the earthmoving industry, Komatsu had become a force to be reckoned with.

It did so in large part by adopting lean production strategies. Fundamental to lean production were the principles of maximizing productivity with the fewest possible people, and the Total Quality Control (TQC) concept. TQC combined product quality and cost efficiency in all facets of manufacturing, from the acquisition of high-quality raw materials and parts to the elimination of product and performance flaws, including in clerical work and financial bookkeeping.[7] By improving the quality of its products and selling them more cheaply than its rivals, in part because of wage levels that were fifty-five percent of those of Caterpillar workers but also because of the company's overarching focus on continually reducing costs, Komatsu increased its sales to the Middle East, Asia and Latin America—regions in which Caterpillar had long dominated.[8] As it became an industry power, Komatsu's long-term goals shifted from sustained growth to direct competition that it neatly summarized with the combative slogan, "Maru-C," or "Encircle Caterpillar."[9] Exports accounted for fifty-five percent of Komatsu's total sales by 1975, and between 1971 and 1980, the firm's total sales more than doubled, increasing its share of world industry sales from ten percent to over fifteen percent in the

[6] Wertheim, "Caterpillar Tractor," 34-35; Bartlett and Rangan, "Komatsu Limited," 4-5, 15, Exhibit 1; Lisa Gross, "Bargained birthright?" *Forbes*, June 6, 1983, 46.
[7] For more on TQC, Quality Circles, and other quality-control programs that grew first in the auto industry, see Barry Bluestone and Irving Bluestone, *Negotiating the Future*, 147, 150; John Price, "Lean Production at Suzuki and Toyota: A Historical Perspective," and Hideo Totsuka, "The Transformation of Japanese Industrial Relations: A Case Study of the Automobile Industry," in Steve Babson ed., *Lean Work: Empowerment and Exploitation in the Global Auto Industry* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 81-107 and 108-130, respectively.
[8] Gross, "Bargained birthright?" 46; Carol J. Loomis, "High Stakes in the Cat Fight," *Fortune*, Vol. 107, May 2, 1983, 66-68. According to Loomis, a particular Komatsu bulldozer, D155A, sold in 1983 for $243,000. It was comparable to but cheaper than Caterpillar's D8L, which sold in 1983 for $276,000.
[9] Bartlett and Rangan, "Komatsu Limited," 15, Exhibit 1; 16, Exhibit 2.

process.[10] As a result, Komatsu grew rapidly and by 1984 had gained fully one-fourth of global heavy machinery sales.

Beginning in 1980, worldwide demand for earthmoving equipment had dramatically slowed, bringing the recession that had wracked other industries to earthmoving as well. Many of the largest industrialized nations, including the US, were in the midst of a deep recession. As oil prices rose in the 1970s, demand in these nations declined, and the recession rippled to encompass oil-rich nations as well. Smaller industrialized nations faced financial difficulties as large international banks restricted lending policies that had fueled both the growth of these nations, and the earthmoving equipment industry, throughout the 1960s and 1970s.[11] This downturn significantly reduced Caterpillar's share of industry sales from just over fifty-three percent in 1980 to forty-three percent in 1984, bringing staggering annual losses to Caterpillar for three straight years starting in 1982.[12]

With the inception of its sales slump in 1980, the company conducted widespread layoffs that disproportionately affected its largely unionized U.S. workforce as it lost about $1 billion between 1982 and 1984. Massive job cuts continued through 1984 as the number of unemployed Caterpillar workers rose to over 30,000, two-thirds of whom were UAW members.[13] Among American Ag-imp companies in December 1982, more workers were actually unemployed than

[10] Bartlett and Rangan, "Komatsu Limited," 3-6, 15, Exhibit 1; Michael Y. Yoshino and U. Srinivasa Rangan, *Strategic Alliances: An Entrepreneurial Approach to Globalization* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1995), 93-96.
[11] Bartlett and Rangan, "Caterpillar Tractor Co.," 14.
[12] Ibid; Bradley K. Martin, "No. 2 Komatsu Continues to Show Profit as No. 1 Caterpillar's Losses Get Larger," *Wall Street Journal*, August 12, 1983, 25. CAT's net losses were $180 million in 1982, $345 million in 1983, and $428 million in 1984.
[13] "Caterpillar Plans Indefinite Layoff of 2,500 Workers," *Wall Street Journal*, August 22, 1980, 7; Gary Putka, "Jobs Lost at Caterpillar Plant Go To Scotland," *Wall Street Journal*, April 10, 1985, 32; Robert S. Eckley, "Caterpillar's Ordeal: Foreign Competition in Capital Goods," *Business Horizons*, Vol. 32, No. 2, March-April 1989, 80-81.

working.[14] Combined with the closings of other area businesses such as Hiram Walker, Pabst Brewery, and truck parts supplier WABCO, unemployment figures in October 1982 ballooned to 19.2 percent in Peoria. In Decatur, another city in which the company was and remains the largest employer, the jobless rate hit 18.9 percent in October 1982 as GE, Essex Wire, engine manufacturer Borg-Warner, and other plants closed. Even long-term employees at Caterpillar with more than ten years seniority were laid off for extended periods of time.[15]

The extraordinary unemployment figures for the cities of Peoria and Decatur, nearly double the national rate of 10.4 percent, illustrate the dire consequences that cities and workers faced when reliant upon a primary employer.[16] Even though they were represented by Republican House minority leader Bob Michel, Peoria and Decatur lacked the political clout to draw big businesses and public works projects to replace the growing number of shuttered factories. It was only in 1976 that an expressway linked Decatur, a medium-sized city of 94,600, to Champaign to the east and Springfield, the capital of Illinois, to the west. Yet soon after a major highway finally linked it to other metropolitan centers around the state, Decatur found its largest employers leaving town on it.

The rapid onset of deindustrialization on Peoria and Decatur left few options for workers. Many workers had secured good-paying industrial jobs at Caterpillar and elsewhere through connections with relatives and friends already employed there, who put in a good word for them with a supervisor. Even those who lacked a network of kin and friends who could lobby for a

[14] Of 132,906 workers, 66,076 were working and 66,830 were unemployed; Total Employment and Layoff Figures in Chains Under Vice President Casstevens' Jurisdiction as of June, 1983, 2, UAW International Executive Board Meetings, Box 26, Mtg. Mins etc. 6/22/83, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University—hereafter UAW IEB, ALUA-WSU.

[15] Milton Derber Interview with Professor Kalman Goldberg, Bradley University, 10/29/81, Box 11, Notebook #3, Peoria, Interviews and Notes File, Milton Derber Papers, University of Illinois University Archives, hereafter MDP UIA; Mark Miller and Lori Miller, "Decatur: Down for the count?" *Crain's Chicago Business*, March 28, 1983, 17-18; Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings* (Washington, D.C.: Government Accounting Office), Vol. 30, No. 1, January 1983, 134; *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 32, No. 19, January 18, 1985, 4-8.

[16] BLS, *Employment and Earnings*.

job on their behalf described moving with relative ease from one industrial job to another—until they began working at Caterpillar.[17]

One Decatur-area businessman described the good fortune of being hired at the company in more celestial terms: "When you get a job out there, you feel like you've died and gone to heaven."[18] These jobs paid much better than other area employers, even unionized ones, creating a "blue-collar elite" of primarily white male workers in the postwar era who could afford a house, a car, myriad consumer items, send their children to college, *and* save some money for the future. This nurtured a remarkable degree of social cohesion for industrial workers, many of whom described living in or around Peoria for most of their lives. Even those from outside the Peoria area were willing to drive considerable distances to work at Caterpillar and, with such a good job, could afford to do so.

When the company laid off thousands of workers, many waited months and in some cases years to be called back. In part, this was because their previous experiences with layoffs indicated that they would eventually return to work, since layoffs had at times been seasonal or short-term. Yet the layoffs of the 1980s were different. The wave of plant closings intensified competition for what good jobs remained. As this chapter will later discuss, Caterpillar also called back far fewer laid-off workers than before as it reorganized its production lines and implementing new, automated technologies to drastically reduce the number of assembly-line workers needed for production.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, more than rampant unemployment wracked the nation's consciousness and status as a superpower and leader of the free world. Coming on the heels of America's ignominious withdrawal from the war in Vietnam in 1973, the Watergate

[17] Jerry Brown interview, April 3, 2007 at his home, Tremont, IL; Jim O'Connor Interview, December 18, 2006 at his home, Marquette Heights, IL.
[18] Miller and Miller, "Decatur: Down for the count?" 19.

scandal toppled President Richard Nixon in August 1974, forcing for the first time in American history the resignation of a sitting president. Particularly for hawkish Americans, the overthrow of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua in the fall of 1979 re-ignited Cold War discourse of a potential "domino effect," this time much closer to America's borders than Vietnam.[19] At the end of 1979, Americans also saw fifty-three Americans taken hostage from the American embassy in Tehran, Iran in retaliation for America's admitting its long-standing ally, the deposed Shah of Iran, for medical treatment. Nightly news broadcasts counted the number of days the hostages spent held in Iran, simultaneously tabulating the frustrations of the seemingly helpless Carter administration and American public. In central Asia, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, contributing to already heightened Cold War tensions in the U.S. and prompting President Carter to announce America's boycott of the Moscow Summer Olympics in 1980.[20] In the span of several years, many Americans felt that their national prestige and patriotic pride had taken several strong body blows, exacerbating a growing sense that the United States—as the pre-eminent military and economic power on earth—was in decline.

With the election of former California governor and ardent cold warrior Ronald Reagan to the presidency in 1980, the nation experienced an upsurge in patriotic pride that channeled the nation's irascible mood of the late 1970s into a renewed fervor for the Cold War, and a demonizing of perceived national enemies. Calling the Soviet Union the "evil empire," Reagan stoked the patriotic passions that millions of Americans already held, especially among the ranks of the working class who, dismayed by high unemployment, inflation, and the image of

[19] Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (NY: Norton Press, 1984), 247-248.
[20] Berman, *America's Right Turn*, 57-58.

American foreign-policy weakness under President Carter, helped to elect Reagan in convincing fashion.[21]

Reagan had many supporters within the ranks of the UAW. While many letters to *UAW Solidarity* criticized Reagan's economic policies and stances toward unions, particularly after his firing of PATCO workers in August 1981, others railed against the UAW for its critical stances toward Reagan. One Mrs. Roy Maystead, the wife of a UAW retiree, stated in March 1982, "I get sick to my stomach when I read your newspaper. All the complaining! We have a president who is really trying to improve the conditions in our country and the people should give him back 100 percent. Give President Reagan a chance! Be positive!" Another, from Brenda Boyd of Tulsa Oklahoma, took *UAW Solidarity* to task for what she considered to be the paper's bias toward the 1984 Democratic presidential ticket of Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro. "All I am saying is your journalism on Mondale vs. Reagan was inappropriate. Too much space [was] devoted to it, too [much was] biased…I feel like I speak for the majority since Reagan won by a landslide."[22]

Reagan received significant support in and around the Peoria area, including within Local 974. Jim O'Connor, a retired worker who was union president from 1981 to 1983 and later a UAW area representative, commented in 1982 that many Local 974 members "were going around wearing Reagan buttons," and estimated that "Reagan got eight out of ten" votes from his membership.[23] While these estimates may seem high, Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford counties that surround the Peoria metropolitan area had long been Republican strongholds. Rarely did

[21] Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History 1974-2008* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 95-96, 99-126.
[22] Mrs. Roy Maystead, "Be Positive," *UAW Solidarity*, Vol. 25, No. 3, March 1982, 20; Brenda Boyd, "One-Sided or Landslide?," *UAW Solidarity*, Vol. 28, No. 2, February 1985, 21. See also Vicki Luther, "Too Much Complaining," *UAW Solidarity*, Vol. 30, No. 6, August 1987, 20.
[23] Thomas B. Edsall, "Caterpillar's Uncertain Future Puts Minority Leader's Job in Jeopardy," *Washington Post National Weekly*, October 25, 1982, 20.

Democratic presidential candidates carry these primarily agricultural, rural counties.[24] Particularly with Reagan, many were drawn to his positive, patriotic rhetoric and aggressive foreign-policy positions. Local 974 union member Rich Corbin, while critical of what he termed Reagan's "anti-unionism," defended Reagan's tough stance toward the Soviet Union, stating, "The one good thing that you can say about Reagan was he didn't take any shit from the Soviets."[25] Reagan's attacks on "big government" and social policies such as welfare, and defense of individualism and strength as essential facets of an American character, likely appealed to many male workers in an era of economic insecurity.[26]

Yet despite the support he received from blue-collar workers and some unions in 1980, Reagan was far from a pro-union president. His permanent replacement of PATCO's striking air traffic controllers in August 1981 sent a clear signal to big business and organized labor alike that Reagan stood staunchly beside businesses, not workers. Reagan's decimation of the PATCO strike set off a tidal wave of company-initiated strikes and lockouts, forcing unions to choose between the rock of concessions and the hard place of losing not just fights with companies, but also their memberships. The new labor-relations climate that Reagan's anti-union offensive encouraged increasingly meant that unions that lost strikes and lockouts also lost representation rights, with companies often choosing not to recognize defeated unions.[27]

Amidst its financial losses and Reagan's business-friendly climate, Caterpillar used the 1982 contract negotiations with the UAW to press for steep concessions. These included reductions in wages and cost-of-living allowances pegged to inflation, fewer paid holidays,

---

[24] Howard W. Allen and Vincent A. Lacey eds. *Illinois Elections, 1818-1990: Candidates and County Returns for President, Governor, Senate, and House of Representatives* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press, 1992).
[25] Rich Corbin, telephone interview with author, March 10, 2004.
[26] Wilentz, *Age of Reagan*, 135-136.
[27] Kim Moody, *An Injury to All: The Decline of American Unionism* (New York: Verso, 1988), 165-191; Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream*, 231-255; Michael Goldfield, *The Decline of Organized Labor in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 40-44.

increased mandatory overtime, automatic dismissal for workers missing more than twenty percent of work time, and collapsing job classifications that protected workers from losing their jobs from changes to work processes and prevented the company from ignoring workers' seniority in the event of layoffs and job transfers. O'Connor termed the company's hard bargaining a "company-engineered strike," resulting in Local 974 and other UAW locals to strike the company for 205 days—the longest strike until that point by the UAW against any American multi-plant employer. The two sides battled to a stalemate, with the UAW agreeing to a wage freeze and to reduce the number of job classifications, and the company agreeing to institute a jointly run apprenticeship program expanding access to skilled trades.[28]

The strike took a toll on strikers and Peorians alike. UAW members received only $65 per week in strike benefits, a far cry from the average wage of $12 per hour they earned while working. The prolonged strike and financial sacrifices UAW members made prompted them to ratify the company's offer of a wage freeze and reduced job classifications—against the advice of the bargaining committee. The 1982-83 strike was also emblematic of the national trend that began in the early 1980s. With unions leery of striking and being permanently replaced, the number of strikes involving 1,000 or more workers fell dramatically through the 1980s. Strikes also became longer battles of attrition, with each side trying to outlast the other and force it to concede in key demands.[29] In a city such as Peoria plagued by skyrocketing unemployment, the long strike angered local residents, who on the whole were more concerned about the impact of a strike on the community than they were about the reasons for the strike—Caterpillar's demands for deep concessions. "I think it's foolish to strike the way things are," asserted Larry Benedict,

[28] Edsall, "Caterpillar's Uncertain Future," 20; David Moberg, "Bitter strike drags on at Caterpillar," *In These Times*, Feb. 2-8, 1983, 5; "Caterpillar Workers Resist Concessions," *Labor Notes*, November 23, 1982, 4; "Trades Gains at Cat," *Skill*, Spring 1983, 12.
[29] Steven K. Ashby and C.J. Hawking, *Staley: The Fight for a New American Labor Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 34; Goldfield, *Decline of Organized Labor*, 46.

a machine operator laid off in 1982.[30] Clothing-store owner Roger Johnson contended that "Peoria had enough problems prior to the strike. The strike just made it more difficult." When the next round of negotiations came in 1986, Peoria mayor Jim Maloof worried that another strike would occur. "We're still suffering from the last strike three years ago," he said. "No one has forgotten it because it devastated this community."[31]

The new era of economic insecurity threatened contractualism from outside, but it also faced problems from within. Despite significant degrees of control that the UAW exerted at Caterpillar, maintaining those gains was a constant struggle against management. As chapter 2 discussed, a labor-management environment existed in which management held and exercised considerable power regarding the organization and pace of production in ways that used workers' knowledge while often denying them control over, input in, and satisfaction from their work. For many Caterpillar workers, interactions with supervisors were daily reminders that, despite efforts to create a "more mature relationship between [the] Union and the Company," issues of power and authority continually pervaded shop-floor and labor relations.[32]

Destruction from Without, Erosion from Within: Jointness at Caterpillar

Faced with mounting losses and an audacious challenge from Komatsu, Caterpillar decided that to beat back the threat to its industrial pre-eminence from the Japanese, it had to join them in implementing streamlined production processes and revamping its relationship with its workforce and the UAW along more favorable terms to the company. Throughout its factories worldwide but focused particularly on its American operations, it initiated two related programs

[30] Harlan S. Byrne, "Peoria, Ill., Hit by Layoffs and Big Strike, Reels From Its Dependence on Caterpillar," *Wall Street Journal*, November 22, 1982, 33.
[31] Matt O'Connor, "Covering the Bases for Union," *Chicago Tribune*, April 7, 1986, 11.
[32] Remarks of Pat Greathouse, UAW Caterpillar Intra-Corporation Council Minutes, Chicago, IL, July 27-28, 1963, 3, UAW Agricultural Implement Department 8-9-76, Accession #354, Box #2, ALUA-WSU—hereafter Ag-Imp 8/9/76, ALUA-WSU.

that were standard features of lean production and were designed to curtail labor and production costs, increase production efficiency, and orient its American workers toward company-centered goals. It introduced the first, its "Plant With a Future (PWAF, pronounced "pea-waff")" program, in 1986 after three years of internal studies. Modeled after production techniques in Japanese industry, it was a massive, expensive and in some ways revolutionary endeavor for Caterpillar that cost the company nearly $2 billion to redesign its assembly lines, and procure the latest computer and robotic equipment.[33]

The second, the Employee Satisfaction Process—or ESP—was a joint labor-management program that the two sides touted as a way to humanize industrial work and the workplace, improve worker-management communication, and foster cooperation on production issues. In practice, it also functioned to break down long-standing bonds of union solidarity by fostering an alternative, more business-oriented group consciousness. Although labor-management programs had long been commonplace in Japan and had proliferated between the UAW and American auto makers in the previous decade, they represented a drastic change from the antagonistic, combative relationship between the union, its members, and the company for the previous three decades. Originating in the negotiations that settled the epic 1982-83 strike, ESP lay dormant until after the 1986 contract negotiations—the exact period when the factory overhaul began in earnest.[34]

PWAF's origins reflect the company's international scope: a French manager of Caterpillar's cavernous factory in Belgium, Pierre Guerindon, conceived the plan with other

[33] James Hendricks, Robert C. Bastian, and Thomas L. Sexton, "Bundle Monitoring of Strategic Projects," *Management Accounting*, Vol. 73, No. 8, February 1992, 31; Peter Miller and Ted O'Leary, "Rethinking the Factory: Caterpillar Inc." *Cultural Values* Vol. 6, No. 1, 2002, 102.
[34] Central Agreement Between Caterpillar Tractor Co. and the UAW, April 19, 1983, Letter of Agreement No. 24, 204-205; Central Agreement Between Caterpillar Tractor Co. and the UAW, July 4, 1986, Letter of Agreement No. 22, 173-174, ILIR, Library Union Vertical File, 1912-2001, Box 15, Folder 6, UIA—hereafter ILIR UIA .

plant managers and vice-presidents, and subsequently brought company managers on tours of factories in Europe and Japan. These were not just the company's plants, but also those of Japanese auto manufacturers such as Honda and Toyota from whom Caterpillar learned about lean production.[35] The company drew upon the diverse experiences of its mid-level managers, who frequently rotated between other factories throughout the world where unions were either nonexistent or in weaker positions than their American counterparts, to formulate and implement its plan. For example, James Despain, who became the general manager of the company's Track-Type Tractor Division in East Peoria, spent considerable time in Japan and Mexico beginning in the early 1970s.[36]

The fundamental structure and psychology underpinning PWAF differentiated it from the assembly line system that had for decades shaped work and people's identities. The company drastically altered its production and assembly systems by implementing innovative lean production techniques that utilized fewer people to manufacture products, and also organized them into different groups from before. This began with a shift from a traditional mass production assembly line system to a "cell production" system utilizing "just-in-time" strategies, both of which were central to lean production.

Within mass production assembly lines at Caterpillar, several production lines existed in which parts and components (groups of pre-assembled parts) shifted between departments. This often meant that, as a particular machine such as a tractor was assembled, the parts for that tractor moved back and forth across the cavernous shop floor, consuming considerable time. It also meant that parts and components, most of which were made on-site, sat in storage until

[35] Bartlett and Ehrlich, "Caterpillar Inc.: George Schaefer Takes Charge," 5.
[36] James Despain, *And Dignity For All: Unlocking Greatness Through Values-Based on Leadership* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Financial Times/Prentice Hall, 2003), 92-119.

needed for assembly, using considerable space and costing the company money since storage does not add value to the product.

Additionally, companies employing mass production strived for cost efficiency by breaking down as many jobs as possible into predetermined, routinized tasks. Workers were required to perform certain duties in a certain order, with the repetition of these tasks in theory maximizing cost efficiency by having that worker perform particular tasks—and no more—to make as many items for the lowest cost attainable. As the UAW gained strength at Caterpillar, it successfully negotiated strict job descriptions stipulating that workers could perform particular tasks and not others. By the late 1950s, UAW contracts with Caterpillar identified no fewer than 524 job classifications, accompanied by a paragraph describing in general terms the responsibilities workers had for each one.[37]

With PWAF the company shed this production system in favor of a "just-in-time" (JIT) manufacturing strategy. Differing from mass production strategies in several ways, "just-in-time" production was tailored not to maximize the amount of goods assembled but to minimize the amount of time, space, personnel, and parts required to assemble them. This meant, first of all, organizing production in a more streamlined fashion. Instead of making many excess parts that would then move into storage until needed, JIT kept smaller stocks of parts on hand to be delivered only when ready for assembly. This reduced the cost of production and storage, as well as the storage space required for truncated inventories.

Seeking to trim its supplier costs by over $1 billion, JIT also meant that the company outsourced parts production to facilities around the world at the same time that it narrowed its base of suppliers, squeezing out companies that could not guarantee low-cost parts delivered

[37] Agreement Entered Into November 29, 1958 Between Caterpillar Tractor Co. and the International Union, UAW-AFL-CIO and its Local Union No. 974, Exhibit A, Section II, UAW Ag-Imp, 8-9-76 Lot, Box 2, Notes, ALUA-WSU. These notes contained 129 pages of job classifications and their accompanying descriptions.

within days.[38] A long-time innovator in the use of robotics for production, Caterpillar rapidly automated its factories, incorporating robots for welding and materials handling and delivery.[39] Computers with fully integrated software on the shop floor showed workers in detail where to place parts, while providing the company with the capability to track production worldwide.[40]

The shift to lean production via PWAF involved altering more than production systems. It required changing the psychology of its workforce. Caterpillar sought to instill in workers senses of competitiveness and individuality by reorganizing workers into smaller groups called cells instead of departments. Comprised of two to six workers, the cell system disrupted group dynamics that came from workers laboring in department with others performing the same jobs. The company touted cells as groups in which workers would perform multiple jobs, thus enhancing their skills and breaking up the monotony of industrial life. While this transpired to some degree, cell production also eliminated jobs, with fewer workers assigned to do more jobs and producing the same amount that used to require more employees. Yet this added responsibility came with degrees of independence and decision-making power that some workers appreciated. Some cell workers scheduled their own production, and also made parts from beginning to end. For Mike Clayton, a cell worker in East Peoria, this gave him "a lot more pride" than simply doing one job over and over again. He embraced the company's new cost-consciousness with aplomb, referring to his production cell as "my own small business right

[38] Lauri Giesen, "Caterpillar Goal: 20% Cost Cut by '86," *American Metal Market* [hereafter *AMM*], September 5, 1983, 5, 18, UAW RD, Box 93, File 21, ALUA-WSU; "Caterpillar Seeking Price Freezes, Certification, to Hike Offshore Sourcing," *Stark's Off-Highway Ledger,* Vol. 3, No. 20, October 8, 1984, 107-108, UAW RD, Box 93, File 23, ALUA-WSU; Merrill Goozner, "Industries Pressure Suppliers over Quality, Costs," *Chicago Tribune*, December 19, 1988, 1.

[39] Jack Thornton, "Caterpillar looks toward factory of future," *AMM,* August 30, 1982, 8, 11; Lauri Giesen, "Caterpillar Stresses Automation in Outlay of $260M," *AMM*, April 22, 1985; Lauri Giesen, "Caterpillar to Install 500 Robots in 5 Years," *AMM*, April 29, 1985.

[40] Karen A. Auguston, "Caterpillar Slashes Lead Time From Weeks to Days," *Modern Materials Handling*, February 1990, 50-51; Robert Knight, "Shop Floor Accepts CASE at a Caterpillar's Pace," *Software Magazine,* Vol. 10, No. 3, March 1990, 72-73.

here."[41] With cell production, the company encouraged workers to think of themselves as "cell proprietors," as if they were independent entrepreneurs who had their own "little business right here on the factory floor," instead of factory workers.[42]

As Caterpillar altered the landscape of the shop floor and pushed for changes in the labor-relations system in the late 1980s, it found that many people—union officers and rank-and-file members alike—were amenable to change. While some accepted change out of fear of the unemployment line and to preserve their jobs, others embraced new and friendlier behavior from managers who sought, rather than ignored, their input. Corporate insistence that new technologies and new labor-relations programs would recognize and enhance workers' skills and knowledge found many workers eager to accept fundamental changes—and make concessions—particularly in a period characterized by intense international competition.

However, PWAF as a lean production system ushered in what Mike Parker and Jane Slaughter have termed "management by stress," increasing responsibilities and productivity while relying on fewer workers. Emphasizing worker responsibility for cost efficiency, historically the prerogative and responsibility of management, PWAF could become what Parker and Slaughter dubbed "super-Taylorism," in which workers were enlisted to monitor themselves, directly perpetuating their own obsolescence.[43] With company appeals to their pride, some workers needed little cajoling to seize the initiative and increase productivity, even if it meant they had to work harder and stay busier than before. Frustrated by the wide space between the

[41] Deborah Goeken, "Technology hits home in Caterpillar plan," *Peoria Journal-Star*, March 4, 1986, B3. See also "Cell members do 'little things' for A+ work," *Caterpillar Folks*, April 26, 1991, 5.
[42] Miller and O'Leary, "Rethinking the Factory," 107-110.
[43] Miller and O'Leary, "Rethinking the Factory," 107-110; Auguston, "Caterpillar Slashes Lead Time," 50-51; Mike Parker and Jane Slaughter, *Choosing Sides: Unions and the Team Concept* (Boston: South End Press, 1988), 14, 16-30, with "super-Taylorism quote on 19; Mike Parker, "Industrial Relations Myth and Shop-Floor Reality: the 'Team Concept' in the Auto Industry," in Nelson Lichtenstein and Howell John Harris eds., *Industrial Democracy in America: The Ambiguous Promise* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 249-274. The changing conditions at Caterpillar echo typical conditions under "lean" production that Parker and Slaughter chronicle.

transmission-manufacturing machines he operated, Brent Scalf had management move the machines closer together to minimize the walking distance and down time. Combined with a machine change that sped up the grinding process he also operated, Scalf's production increased fifty-five percent after his job was re-timed. This saved Cat from needing new grinding machines, saving the company thousands of dollars. Scalf, meanwhile, earned no extra wages as a result of his suggestion to move his machines closer together.[44]

Yet such alterations to work processes were rationalized as serving the greater good of improving Caterpillar's competitive position by improving productivity and controlling costs. PWAF's partner program, ESP, instilled the importance of teamwork between workers and management in the era of competition and cost consciousness. It blurred the lines between union and management, cultivating a broader conception of belonging than the adversarialism that characterized union-management squabbling. No longer referred to as employees and management, "team members" volunteering for the ESP program received extensive training, typically "16 to 20 hours of classroom training at four hours per day." In these sessions, ESP groups participated in exercises to hone listening skills and, more importantly, to break down the traditional barriers between unionized workers and supervisors.[45] Union leaders often served as coordinators, who themselves would receive further training and would in turn organize and train others as facilitators and form additional groups.[46] These groups, or teams, met for an hour each week, alleviating workers from the rigors of factory life to discuss job-related problems and issues, as well as ways to improve production and cost efficiency.

---

[44] "Scalf didn't like inefficiency of old way," *Caterpillar Folks*, Vol. XL, No. 1, January 19, 1990, 5, Periodicals Collection, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, IL—hereafter ALPL.
[45] Murel Jackson and Paul Strang, "ESP," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 35, No. 12, December 18, 1987, 12; Vol. 37, No. 8, August 19, 1988, 8.
[46] "ESP," *Caterpillar Folks*, Vol. XXXVIII No. 4, March 4, 1988, 4, Periodicals Collection, April 24 1986-Dec. 16 1988 Box, ALPL.

For ESP to function effectively, its members had to foster an atmosphere of trust between union members and management where little, if any, had existed before. Participants acknowledged overcoming levels of suspicion when they first joined ESP teams. Local 974 member Bill Crowden admitted early on, "I figured I was getting a bill of goods. You have to get over that obstacle of distrust. It won't happen overnight, but once people see this process as advantageous, it will happen."[47] Other echoed Crowden's assessment of ESP. Having worked for five months with other union members and management in the "Engineering Craftsmen" team to redesign the Central Shop in a section of Caterpillar's East Peoria factory, union millwright Larry Schatz declared, "There are a lot of detractors on both sides, management and union, but the bottom line is that each team is made up of individuals and the only format a voice can be heard in is as a team member…I realize not everyone will join, but they're fools if they don't. They truly are." Sam Britton, a union tinner for twenty years and fellow member of Engineering Craftsmen, concurred. "Not only are you going to get better working conditions [through ESP], you're going to get the harmonious relationship of working with company and union people."[48]

ESP encouraged union officials, members, and management to think as integrated units that would reduce the number of and need for grievances, and enhance job security through cost savings, even adopting a variety of group names to convey the positive, team-oriented approach to the challenge that competition presented them.[49] Within a few months that ESP groups started in 1987, scores of teams involving several hundred workers all over Caterpillar factories.

---

[47] Ibid.
[48] "ESP…changing the way Craftsmen seen things in East Peoria Central Shop," *Caterpillar Folks*, Vol. XXVIII No. 22, December 16, 1988, 3, Periodicals Collection, April 24 1986-Dec. 16 1988 Box, ALPL.
[49] Robert L. Rose and Alex Kotlowitz, "Back To Bickering: Strife Between UAW and Caterpillar Blights Promising Labor Idea," *Wall Street Journal*, November 23, 1992, UAW Drawer #3, Caterpillar Strike 1991-6, Union Materials File #1, ILIR, UIA; "Technical Facilities' ESP," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 39, No. 3, March 16, 1990, 7; Vol. 39, No. 12, December 11, 1990, 5.

The advent of lean production strategies and jointness coincided with changes in leadership and labor-relations strategy at the local and International levels. Tony Green, a young but experienced shop-floor representative in Mossville, won the Local 974 presidency in 1984 with the promise to defend workers' interests while improving the Local's historically tempestuous relationship with the company after the 205-day strike of 1982-1983. The long strike convinced many members and all six candidates for Local 974 president in 1984 that a new, more moderate tone in labor relations was necessary for the Union.[50]

While recognizing the "Catch-22" in which the union found itself—concerned about economic hardship and new technology eliminating jobs but also seeking to help "keep Cat #1"—Green worked intensely to improve the union's relationship with the company by encouraging the rank and file to help make the company more competitive by participating in ESP. Green also publicized the union's efforts at cultivating better labor relations with the company by throwing out the first pitch at a Peoria Chiefs minor league baseball game with company president Bob Gilmore, touring auto plants where employee-involvement programs existed, and touting the quality of Caterpillar products to potential buyers at the 1987 Con-Expo.[51]

During this period of crisis for the UAW, the Union became more willing to accommodate corporate objectives in order to ensure job security. It facilitated the shift to lean production and the formation of work cells by agreeing to drastic reductions in the number of classifications in the 1983 and 1986 negotiations, which by this time numbered 84 instead of the 524 job classifications that existed in the late 1950s. Cells allowed the company to use

[50] "Caterpillar workers to choose new leader," *The Labor Paper* (Peoria, IL), Vol. 51, No. 4, April 26, 1984, 8-9.
[51] Tony Green, "President's Report," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 35, No. 1, January 23, 1987, 3; Vol. 35, No. 2, February 20, 1987, 5; Vol. 30, No. 12, June 22, 1984, 2; Vol. 30, No. 13, August 10, 1984, 1; Vol. 35, No. 10, October 16, 1987, 3; Jerry Brown, "Bargaining Committee Report," Vol. 32, No. 19, January 18, 1985, 12; "IF CAT LOSES, WE LOSE," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 32, No. 16, October 19, 1984, 1.

employees more "flexibly." This entailed minimizing the jobs outside one's own into which he or she could bump if laid off, resulting in less senior people working, often with overtime, while more senior people were laid off.[52] But for those who still held jobs, negotiations in 1986 and 1988 yielded guarantees protecting nearly all active workers from layoffs throughout the length of the contracts, while also containing letters of agreement that made it policy to reduce the number of grievances by developing "a constructive relationship based on trust and respect."[53] Although the UAW still filed grievances when disputes arose, it appeared the era of enmity between the union and company was waning.

However, in the event that future disputes might occur, the company persuaded the UAW to yield crucial contractual ground by voting to allow workers at Morton Parts, a vital parts manufacturing and distribution center near Peoria that serviced Caterpillar plants and dealers worldwide, to work 120 days after the expiration of the contract—even if the UAW were on strike.[54] The union's trust in Caterpillar's promise of more jobs to offset layoffs, and in the new system of "trust and respect," would later provide the company with a significant advantage during the long strikes of the 1990s by continuing to provide important replacement parts to customers that, had the UAW not made this agreement, would have otherwise been extremely difficult to accomplish.[55] At the time, the UAW believed that the promise of jobs for union members outweighed the potential for a strike that had not occurred for several years.

In the late 1980s, the possibility of a strike seemed remote with two consecutive contracts, in 1986 and 1988, settled without a strike for the first time ever between the UAW and

[52] Jerry Brown, "Bargaining Committee Report," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 35, No. 3, March 20, 1987, 6; Wayne Schmidt Interview.
[53] Central Agreement Between Caterpillar Tractor Co. and the UAW, July 4, 1986, Letter of Agreement No. 27; Central Agreement, October 21, 1988, Letter of Agreement No. 24, ILIR, Series 2—Automobile Workers, Box 15, File 6, UIA.
[54] Brown Interview.
[55] O'Connor Interview; Schmidt Interview.

Caterpillar. The union's espousal of ESP recast its own adversarial relationship with management as obstructionist and archaic behavior in a competitive era that required new approaches to problems. ESP leaders stated that "ESP isn't for everyone. If you can't listen to other people's ideas or suggestions or be able to give or take you probably wouldn't be able to work within a [ESP] group."[56] This appealed to significant numbers of workers who had endured strikes and harsh managers, and now felt empowered to voice their opinions and concerns about work, and who may have felt that they previously lacked the means to do so within their own union organization.

Employees increasingly shared their detailed knowledge of their machines and the production process with managers who, unlike before, were willing to listen to their ideas. Cost savings that these information-sharing programs generated through smoother tracking, transfer and storage of materials, and facilitating employee cross-training on different jobs, confirmed in its participants the effectiveness of the programs, helped return Caterpillar to profitability, and provided a resurgent sense of fulfillment and pride through industrial work.[57]

Within the International leadership, the purpose and targets of employee-involvement had changed by the 1980s as rampant unemployment battered the auto industry, slashing UAW membership nearly in half.[58] Drawing upon the efforts of such businesses as IBM, AT&T, Polaroid, and General Mills in the early 1970s to lessen their authoritarian managerial styles, UAW vice-president Irving Bluestone helped to form Quality of Work Life (QWL) programs to solve workplace problems that hindered workers' productivity, lowered their morale, and challenged the authority of the union and companies alike. The rank and-file rebellion at GM's

[56] "ESP IS ON THE MOVE," *UAW Local 974 News,* Vol. 37, No. 4, April 22, 1988, 3.
[57] "Technical Facilities ESP," *UAW Local 974 News,* Vol. 37, No. 13, December 23, 1988, 4; Vol. 39, No. 1, January 26, 1990, 6; Vol. 39, No. 3, March 16, 1990, 7; Vol. 39, No. 5, March 25, 1990, 4; Vol. 38, No. 7, July 21, 1989, 8; "Test and Development ESP," *UAW Local 974 News,* Vol. 39, No. 12, December 11, 1990, 5.
[58] Barry Bearak, "Staggered by Hits, Unions Need Ways to Regain Punch," *Los Angeles Times,* May 18, 1995, A13.

Lordstown, Ohio plant in 1971 and 1972 particularly worried UAW leaders. Lordstown workers, especially the many young workers under 25 who had served in Vietnam, bristled at the brutal assembly line pace and the monotony that their highly specialized, repetitive jobs produced. High wages hardly offset these conditions, resulting in high absenteeism rates, frequent sabotage, alcoholism, and a series of strikes that the International struggled to tamp down.[59] Bluestone sought to improve the working environment and productivity in auto by reducing drug and alcohol abuse through counseling programs, making work more rewarding by increasing cross-training in other jobs, and infusing workers' voices into production issues. Yet employee involvement or jointness by the mid-1980s under Bluestone's replacement Donald Ephlin, became a program to restore corporate America's industrial dominance by improving America's competitiveness against Japanese rivals.[60] Ephlin averred in militaristic rhetoric that the role of unions in the 1980s was to "reverse the rapid decline of America's manufacturing industries and help restore US competitiveness where it counts, in the battle for markets and jobs."[61] Such language closely paralleled that of business leaders, including Caterpillar president Peter Donis. "The timing of the Japanese onslaught couldn't have been worse," Donis declared about Komatsu's market growth in the late 1970s and early 1980s. "Just as they launched their attack, the worldwide construction equipment market collapsed."[62]

---

[59] On changing managerial policies in this period, see Stephen P. Waring, *Taylorism Transformed: Scientific Management Theory Since 1945* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 145-146. On the conditions and strikes at Lordstown,, see David F. Moberg, "Rattling the Golden Chains: Conflict and Consciousness of Auto Workers" (Ph.D. Diss: University of Wisconsin, 1978); Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 21-50.

[60] "Quality of Work Life Program, GMAD-Tarrytown," April 1976, UAW Vice-President Irving Bluestone Collection, Box 56, QWL Convention, Articles 1976 file; "Remarks of Mr. Irving Bluestone, Wayne State University," January 25, 1979, 2-7, UAW Vice-President's Office, Irving Bluestone Collection, Box 44, QWL Program: Wayne State University January 25, 1979 file, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University—hereafter VP IB, ALUA-WSU.

[61] Donald F. Ephlin, "United Auto Workers: Pioneers in Labor-Management Partnership," in Jerome M. Rosow ed., *Teamwork: Joint Labor-Management Programs in America* (NY: Pergamon Press, 1986), 141.

[62] Journal of Commerce, "Caterpillar Puts Quality in Spotlight," *Chicago Tribune*, November 14, 1988, Business Section, 5.

Yet the International's embrace of jointness did not occur without contention within its ranks. Debates about jointness worked their way into the pages of *UAW Solidarity* in the mid-1980s around the same time that Caterpillar and UAW had embarked on their own effort at shop-floor cooperation. In its publication, the International heralded the GM-Toyota joint venture in Fremont, California that re-opened a closed GM factory in 1985 as "A New Kind of Workplace" where UAW members wanted "the good feelings to last." One letter to the editor, from Local 731 member Ed Hugo, dismissed any "correlation between Quality of Work Life [QWL, UAW-GM's version of ESP] and concessions and plant closings, while urging fellow UAW members to be patient with QWL-style programs in order to "work toward changing attitudes and working conditions that will hopefully make us more competitive." Other letters expressed skepticism or outright hostility toward jointness as the union turning its back on its members' class position and its own militant heritage. Ralph Holbrook of Local 95 saw QWL as a way "to destroy the union from within…in 20 years, I have never seen our members so divided as they are now. People say…we can do without a union and union dues. Wow!" Former Fremont GM worker admonished the UAW and fellow members to "be realistic. We are workers, not owners. Our interests are not the same. Be vigilant, protect our rights."[63]

Others who opposed the UAW's lurch toward cooperation with companies through jointness found themselves treated as enemies of the UAW one-party bureaucracy. Retired International representative Jerry Tucker ran afoul of the UAW leadership in the 1980s through his staunch opposition to labor-management cooperation, and his innovative in-plant tactics that generated rank-and-file participation to counter companies' drive for concessions. The union consistently disavowed itself of Tucker's attempt to rejuvenate adversarial unionism through in-

[63] Ralph L. Holbrook, "It Divides Us," *UAW Solidarity*, Vol. 29, No. 3, March 1986, 20; Saul Wachter, "NUMMI Doubter," *UAW Solidarity*, Vol. 28, No. 10, October 1985, 20-21.

plant strategies, such as slow-downs, that Tucker termed "running the plant backwards." Contrary to the concessions that the UAW granted to auto companies in 1978 and 1979, and the traditional strike tactics that it on occasion continued to perform in the 1980s, Tucker's savvy schemes enlisted the support of rank-and-file members for their success. Utilizing their superior knowledge of their jobs, the various tasks that workers performed, and their awareness of production routines, patterns and deadlines, Tucker instilled confidence in workers that new tactics could prove successful, while also honing their ability to disrupt work at the point of production—the shop floor—rather than outside the factory gates on strike. Tucker and the workers whom he represented in contract negotiations developed and implemented in-plant tactics in the early to mid-1980s, when companies adopted aggressive stances toward unions in negotiations, attempting to gain concessions either through hard posturing during bargaining, pushing unions out on strike when companies became increasingly willing to replace them, or both.[64]

Tucker's candidacies in 1986 and 1989 for the head of UAW's sprawling Region 5 in the Midwest resulted in extremely close elections. Although Tucker lost the first, the result was overturned by an NLRB decision and he won a make-up election. The UAW bureaucracy red-baited and race-baited Tucker and his supporters in the New Directions Movement, which was a dissident anti-concession faction formed in the late 1980s. Tucker, who is white and has a wife who is African American, was accused of having an adulterous relationship with another Black woman, and his multi-racial supporters were apparently pelted with racist epithets. Roy Wyse, Tucker's opponent in 1989, stated that his first act as director of Region 5 would be to "take

[64] Tucker interview, October 30, 2004; Jack Metzgar, "'Running the Plant Backwards' in UAW Region 5," *Labor Research Review*, Fall 1985, 35-43.

down the Communist flag from in front of the Region 5 headquarters."[65] The responses to Tucker's tactics, indeed to his very candidacy for union office, exemplified the elasticity and prevalence of 'othering' within the UAW. Tucker's efforts to democratize the UAW, to defend union members against concessions and the precarious class position that resulted, elicited ad hominem attacks and invocations of "un-American" nationalist imagery.

In the course of conducting character assassinations on Tucker and his supporters, the UAW felled more than his candidacy for Region 5. According to Tucker, the UAW leadership also attacked Victor Reuther, former UAW vice-president, union co-founder and brother of former UAW president Walter Reuther, for his support of Tucker's candidacy, opposition to UAW's cooperation with companies, and support for the New Directions Movement. By this point, Reuther had already fallen out of favor with the UAW Executive Board for his criticism of the UAW's policies on jointness. Tucker claimed that the UAW put out by word-of-mouth at its conventions that Reuther was "senile," and was an embarrassment to his brother Walter, similar to how the American public viewed former President Carter's brother Billy.[66]

Those who publicly associated with Tucker or inquired about using his strategies rather than "traditional" strike tactics found themselves attacked or ridiculed at the local level as well. After attending a particularly contentious UAW Convention in 1989, Green wrote to the membership, "The knowledgeable voting delegates could easily see through the fictitious literature and speeches by the 'New Directions' leaders (?) and rejected their ideas and beliefs. We have made many strides through some very difficult times to be taken and thrown backwards."[67] Alternatives to jointness did exist, as Tucker and New Directions had argued. Yet

[65] Kim Moody, *An Injury To All: The Decline of American Unionism* (NY: Verso, 1988), 238-239; Jane Slaughter, "Reform Candidates Still Leading in UAW," *Labor Notes*, #122, May 1989, 7.
[66] E-mail correspondence with Jerry Tucker, November 23, 2004, used with permission.
[67] Tony Green, "President's Report," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 38, No. 7, June 16, 1989, 12.

its political opponents in the UAW, including local officers such as Green, left little doubt in the minds of rank-and-file members that those who supported Tucker, or used his tactics that ran counter to the union's cooperation with corporations, were deemed outsiders who threatened the perceived progress of jointness and union efforts to keep American businesses competitive.

Stoking the Fires of Competitiveness: The UAW, Nationalism, and Race

The UAW's effort to maintain the competitiveness of American businesses capitalized on and fomented the nationalist surge within its ranks that the era of intensified industrial competition with Japanese companies had generated. Publications such as *UAW Solidarity* and *Local 974 News* regularly published articles and letters to the editor touting the productivity and skill of American workers, as well as endorsements of America's resurgent "Buy American" movement. They exhorted members to protect American jobs and maintain a decent way of life for their families by consuming American goods whenever possible. The UAW consistently criticized the Reagan administration's free trade policies that provided a steady flow of affordable imported goods to American consumers, but placed union members in competition with working-class counterparts abroad. Other, more stridently anti-Japanese missives utilized bellicose rhetoric that blurred the line between Japanese companies competing with American-based firms and the Japanese people themselves. Throughout the mid to late 1980s, these periodicals reminded UAW members and their families that they were in a competition with foreign workers on which not just their jobs, but an "American way of life" characterized by secure jobs, good wages and the capacity to consume, depended.

According to publicity and education director Wayne Schmidt, the editor of *UAW Local 974 News* during the 1980s, he oversaw all of what appeared in the union's newspaper, selecting

pieces that he belied "the membership would respond to."[68] Increasingly the newspaper's content contained articles and cartoons that criticized Japan and its trade relationship with the U.S., railed against imported consumer products, and urged UAW members and their families to purchase American-made goods. While articles that were critical of management actions considered abusive toward workers, and of the growing disparity between rich and poor during the 1980s were published, the predominant focus on trade, corporate competition, and preserving an "American way of life" illustrated how issues and constructs of nation superseded class by re-framing issues within the context of national interests. This effectively downplayed potentially divergent economic and labor-relations interests between UAW and Caterpillar at the precise time that the union and company embarked on the journey toward labor-management cooperation. *UAW Solidarity* merits attention as well, not only because it is the primary information source for the union but also because its members regularly read it. According to research that Peter Hart conducted for the UAW in 1979, the majority of its members read *Solidarity*, 53 percent of those indicating that they read it "most of the time."[69]

As a result of the mass layoffs and subsequent loss of dues revenue afflicting Local 974, the union decided at the beginning of 1985 to alter the format of *UAW Local 974 News* from an eight-page bi-weekly paper to a twelve-page monthly in order to cut back on expenses. In its transition to a twelve-page monthly, it also began to incorporate articles generated and distributed in monthly news packets by the UAW International's network, the UAW Local Union Publishers Association, or UAW-LUPA. Sent in packets of thirty-five to forty articles and cartoons to local unions ten months of the year, these were distinguished in the *UAW Local 974 News* by the UAW-LUPA tag line at the article's end, as well as by the different type face from

[68] Schmidt Interview.
[69] Presentation by Peter Hart, November 13, 1979, UAW IEB Meetings, Box 23, November 12-14, 1979 File, 60, ALUA-WSU.

locally written articles. The content that UAW-LUPA sent was not randomly determined, but rather selected by the LUPA coordinator after reviewing "the local union papers and newsletters to pinpoint trends, viewpoints and issues of interest to local union members."[70] While by no means the exclusive source of "Buy American" or anti-Japanese material in the Local's paper, the articles that UAW-LUPA sent and Schmidt selected frequently criticized Japan and its "unfair" trade policy and encouraged "Buy American" efforts. Consequently, the International and Local 974 played central roles in stoking nationalist fervor among the membership, shaping members' views of Japan and other foreign nations, international trade and government policies, and consumption.

UAW Local 974 News consistently placed Japan, America's nominal Cold War ally but primary economic competitor, and other nations squarely within the UAW's critical gaze for all readers to see. Trade policies were the primary front in the political and rhetorical attack that the UAW leveled against Japan and the Reagan administration, particularly for maintaining a policy of low tariffs for foreign cars, steel, electronics, clothing and textiles—consumer and industrial staples that the US increasingly imported from Asia and Latin America.[71] Cartoons frequently portrayed Reagan as indifferent to the mounting trade gap, with one casting him as a modern-day Nero fiddling while the trade gap ballooned nearby. In another, Reagan was taken to task for appearing to support the Buy American movement while undercutting it with his trade policies and consumerism that aided Japan. "Turn up the Sony television," he asked an adviser. "I want to hear the speech." On the set, a man spoke surrounded by the patriotic imagery of an American flag and signs reading "Buy American," clearly implicating Reagan and his import policies as anti-American and hurting American workers. As if from a horror movie, one cartoon

[70] "It's an exclusive," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 34, No. 5, May 16, 1986, 2.
[71] Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream*, charts on 238, 252.

incorporated the image of a bonsai tree to represent Japanese imports growing out of control, spreading over the US Capitol building as a dehumanized but nonetheless menacing monster attacking the nation's capitol.[72]

The Buy American movement was placed front-and-center in the pages of *Local 974 News*, urging members to at once purchase American and union-made consumer items despite the growing difficulty of locating such products. These articles, which frequently came from UAW-LUPA, connected the interests of local communities, union members, and American consumers as one and the same—"Buy Union, Buy American." Not purchasing union-made American products meant paying "a price much higher than dollars and cents on the tag or sticker. You pay that price over and again, in the kind of life people can live in your community—and your country." Fearful of the decline of Fordism—the capacity to consume what one makes—members were warned, "If you out that American union-made product aside today, you may find that tomorrow it's too late—that it's no longer available."[73]

Consumption and production were directly linked to the fate of workers, American industries, and the nation alike on the pages of UAW periodicals. Lacking good-paying industrial jobs as a result of outsourcing and foreign competition would result in a lower standard of living for working-class people, whose skills making cars and earthmoving equipment would no longer be of use. Such a loss would mean that "more and more of us will be finding ourselves flipping hamburgers for $3.50 an hour. There will be no benefits, no 40 hours per week…and no way to raise a family. We won't be buying cars, or paying taxes either. Without taxes, no roads

[72] *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 33, No. 14, March 21, 1986, 8; Vol. 34, No. 7, July 18, 1986, 4; Vol. 33, No. 10, October 25, 1985, 7.
[73] See for example "Buy Union, Buy American," Vol. 35, No. 9, September 18, 1987, 3.

will be built, therefore, there will be no need for road graders, trucks or heavy equipment."[74] To the UAW, preserving good jobs in the US was the "single most important" way to ensure a high quality of life for its members, but also for American industries and communities.

This required the vigilance of spouses as well as industrial workers to locate and purchase American-made products. Although women comprised an increasing percentage of industrial jobs by the 1980s, men still performed the vast majority of factory work, especially at Caterpillar. Retired union officials estimated that women held ten percent or fewer of the workers at Caterpillar, with most of those in non-union clerical and managerial positions and not on the assembly line.[75] However, this did not prevent the wives of male union members encouraging others to buy American and safeguard American jobs. Lois Piazza, the wife of Local 338 president Sam Piazza, summoned women "to be the example for our husbands, boyfriends, sons and daughters" by avoiding foreign-made products. Piazza urged wives to buy American products that were implicitly, to her, of superior quality. "I know American-made clothes and shoes are hard to find and sometimes more expensive," she confided, "but it's worth it—buy quality instead of quantity."[76] To Piazza, when Americans consumers chose to buy American products, they helped save American jobs by avoiding foreign-made goods that were inherently 'cheap,' of poor quality as well as inexpensive. This shaped the identity of American *goods*, as well as American workers, as superior to their foreign counterparts.

Other arguments for protecting American jobs and buying American products reflected a pernicious flip-side to this burgeoning working-class nationalism that extended beyond criticizing trade policies and alleging the superiority of American products. Some, such as

[74] "The #1 issue: Jobs!" *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 37, No. 8, August 19, 1988, 4, reprinted from Ed Woker, *UAW Local 751 News*.
[75] Brown interview; Legel interview.
[76] "Women: It's up to us To save American Industry!" *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 33, No. 13, January 24, 1986, 3.

Evelyn and Marshall Morgan of Chicago, Illinois urged *Solidarity*'s readers to boycott all Japanese goods. "The only way to beat the Japanese is to stop buying their goods of all kinds, especially autos and electronic products. We must all hope that some day soon American manufacturing will again be No. 1 in the world."[77] The language is telling, eliding the distinction between Japanese corporations and citizens and calling for their defeat. Additionally, the Morgans intertwined the interests of Americans in general with American manufacturing, even as American businesses closed domestic operations and moved jobs overseas. That is, they presented the interests of American manufacturers as national whether or not their manufacturing operations remained completely, or even primarily, national in scope.

At times, the UAW accused the Japanese of hiring policies that discriminated against union members, African Americans, and women. As Japanese automakers—at the behest of the UAW to employ American workers—opened operations within the US, they garnered criticism from the UAW and other unions for employing non-union construction workers and, later, opposing UAW efforts to unionize their factories. When Toyota's Japanese construction firm hired mostly non-union labor for its Georgetown, Kentucky plant, the AFL-CIO picketed the work site and the Japanese embassy in Washington D.C. until the construction company, under pressure from Toyota, relented.[78]

The UAW was particularly defensive about how patriotic images and institutions were represented and funded. Two issues of *Solidarity* in 1986 ran a brief letter from Niles Bell, member of UAW 624 in Minoa, NY, who felt that the Aloha Liberty Foundation in Honolulu, Hawaii "insulted every American citizen (in particular UAW members) by sponsoring a Statue of Liberty essay writing contest and rewarding the winning writer with a foreign car." Bell

[77] Evelyn and Marshall Morgan, "Broken promises," *UAW Solidarity*, Vol., 30, No. 6, August 1987, 20.
[78] "Toyota bends to union protest," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 35, No. 1, January 23, 1987, 5.

suggested that "the Aloha Liberty Foundation committee members should all be rewarded for their lack of common sense with a one-way ticket to Japan!"[79] The union also took umbrage with Japanese manufacturer Subaru's being selected as the official car of the US Olympic team.[80] Allowing foreign car companies to offer their products as a prize for a writing contest about a storied national landmark, and to raise money for America's Olympic team, was not simply an insufficient way to honor symbols of Americana—it was downright unpatriotic.

Race played an increasingly prominent role in anti-Japanese articles. Honda came under fire from the UAW, which had a better record of combating racial discrimination than many American unions, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for failing to hire African Americans at its Marysville, Ohio factory. Urging union members to "buy American because Japanese racism isn't welcome here," *Local 974 News* reported that Honda's discriminatory hiring practices resulted in an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) decision forcing Honda to hire, with back pay, 370 African Americans and women.[81]

However, examples of racism appeared in union newspapers other than when the union levied accusations of discriminatory hiring practices against Japanese firms. Although the vast majority of articles, even those harshly critical, did not resort to slurring the Japanese, several used derisive characterizations and racist stereotypes, while others framed economic competition in decidedly militaristic terms. They illustrated the persistence of anti-Japanese sentiment and

[79] Niles F. Bell, "send Aloha Liberty Foundation to Japan" and "Send Them Packing," *UAW Solidarity*, Vol. 29, No. 6 and No. 9, July-August, 20, and November 1986, 21; see also Jim Copley, "No Yuppie, He," *UAW Solidarity*, Vol. 29, No. 8, October 1-15, 1986, 20-21; "Japanese buy American hearts & minds," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 37, No. 8, August 19, 1988, 6. For more on the resurgence of nativist sentiment connected to the "Buy American" movement, see Dana Frank, *Buy American: The Untold Story of Economic Nationalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999).
[80] "Will Lady Liberty Sell Subarus?" *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 33, No. 14, February 21, 1986, 3.
[81] "NAACP Blasts Honda," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 35, No. 1, January 23, 1987, 5; "Please buy American," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 37, No. 13, December 20, 1988, 12.

the resurgence of American nativism during this period, with long-standing stereotypes adapted to fit the shifting power dynamics between the two nations.

These stereotypes cast the Japanese as inherently dangerous by portraying them as untrustworthy, deceitful, threatening to American institutions, culture, and economic hegemony, and militaristic. Yet even as Americans characterized the Japanese as resurgent industrial "supermen" who threatened to topple the US from its postwar economic pedestal, they also sneered at the quality of Japanese products, terming them "Jap junk."[82] Americans also ridiculed the Japanese as industrial copycats, achieving national economic success simply by purchasing and mimicking (innately) American innovations and making them more cheaply. While these stereotypes were somewhat contradictory—the Japanese at once as formidable and menacing but also unimaginative doppelgangers who produced inferior products—they ultimately acted as mutually reinforcing tropes.[83] Americans in general, and workers threatened with unemployment and economic insecurity in particular, refashioned the "yellow peril" of the late nineteenth century to fit a late twentieth-century milieu in which rampant deindustrialization, and the globalization of work and consumer products, threatened to undermine American economic supremacy.

Americans' fears of unemployment, privation, and national decline emerge in the discussion above. But the most visceral anti-Japanese letters to appear in union publications illustrate the focused resentment, and the durability of racist stereotypes, some Americans expressed toward the Japanese. After buying an American compact car, Jim Bollinger wrote a

[82] This term existed throughout much of the postwar period. The pejorative became popular in the mid to late 1950s with the growing presence of Japanese-made toys, electronics, and ornaments in the US market. It may have also stemmed from the increased use of plastics in Japanese toys, which were lighter and more fragile than American toys that more frequently used steel and other metals.

[83] For more on the construction of stereotypes of both the Japanese and Americans, see John Dower, "Race, Language, and War in Two Cultures: World War II in Asia," in Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch eds., *The War in American Culture: Society and Consciousness During World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 169-201.

letter to the editor expressing outrage that Nissan failed to increase their production in the US, and imported more parts to the US than it produced here. Claiming that "only a small percentage are assembled in Tennessee [while] the rest come over from Japan," Bollinger asked, "Isn't this cunning to make people here think they are American made?" Yet Bollinger also fretted that unwanted aspects of Japanese culture would emanate from Japanese-American joint ventures such as NUMMI, which Toyota and GM founded in 1984. "It is a known fact," Bollinger warned, "that for some Americans to work in these 'joint venture' factories they are forced to learn a lot of the Japanese language." This prompted him to end his missive ominously, "Just remember Pearl Harbor and that two of their ambassadors were here in Washington, D.C. at that time. What do you think is coming next?"[84]

Invoking the imagery of invasion to represent Japanese imports was far from new in the mid-1980s. Immediately after World War Two, but especially as Japanese textiles and clothing became more prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s, American textile workers themselves compared increased Japanese imports to a Pearl-Harbor like attack. Auto workers facing heightened competition from fuel-efficient Japanese compact cars in the 1970s followed suit.[85] When Komatsu began selling tractors in the US in 1981, the front cover of *UAW Solidarity* dubbed it "THE TRACTOR INVASION," with the image of tractors emerging from the ocean with Japanese flags emblazoned atop them.[86]

Yet the nativism that flared up in the 1980s among some Caterpillar workers occurred after the Buy American movement was already well under way, *after* other industries and other union members had faced foreign competition—and lost their jobs. This also transpired after an important shift for unions espousing the Buy American movement. When the Buy American

[84] Jim Bollinger, "Letter to the Editor," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 35, No. 11, November 20, 1987, 5.
[85] Frank, *Buy American*, 145, 162-163.
[86] "THE TRACTOR INVASION," *UAW Solidarity*, May 1981, 1.

ideology percolated from rank-and-file union members to pressure union leaders in the 1970s and the early 1980s, it was primarily a bottom-up movement.[87] But the mid-to-late 1980s, when Caterpillar workers began to tout consumer nationalism, the UAW devoted considerably more effort to harnessing its potential by touting economic nationalism, disseminating supporting literature through UAW-LUPA, and criticizing foreigners for eliminating American jobs.

Bollinger's letter defended working-class interests, but framed them within nativist rhetoric that relegated class concerns to secondary status behind national and cultural conflict. They also laid bare racist sentiments that some in the UAW feared may surface. In 1982 Lee Price, who analyzed trade issues for the UAW Research Department staff, circulated a confidential memo alerting the union's leadership to the possibility that such hostility may arise. "I would like to suggest," Price cautioned, "that all our orientation sessions *explicitly* address a potentially explosive issue: racist remarks…We cannot avoid mentioning Japan. But we need not mention race, physical features, ethnic slurs, or World War II."[88]

While it is difficult to assess whether UAW leaders turned a blind eye to or actively abetted anti-Japanese nativism, the presence of such acrimonious letters in Local 974's newspaper—and the assertion of Wayne Schmidt that he oversaw whatever appeared on its pages—suggests that more than members' free speech was at work when these appeared in print. "I had discretionary power of whatever went in the paper," Schmidt said. "There was nothing that required me to put somebody's article in the paper."[89] While certainly more strident in language and tone than other pieces, these operated to reinforce issues of nationalism and

[87] Frank, *Buy American*, 170-172.
[88] Lee Price to 'Several," March 18, 1982, UAW Records Dept. Unprocessed Collection, Box 1, Folder 10, cited in Frank, *Buy American*, 169, 284 fn 32, emphasis in the original.
[89] Schmidt interview.

competition, while raising the rhetorical ante to a level beyond serious, but survival, for American workers and businesses.

Such expressions of nationalism and competition went beyond anti-Japanese rhetoric. When Caterpillar announced that it intended to close its factory in Uddingston, Scotland in early 1987, workers occupied the factory and refused to leave. They reached out for support from their counterparts across the Atlantic, and received bits of information about the company moving work out of Scotland from Local 974 through Jimmy Airlie, the Scottish director of their engineering union, AEU.[90]

However, they received a cold shoulder from President Tony Green. With 974's membership beset by layoffs, and American factories in the Caterpillar chain closing or scaled down, Green discussed his recent participation in the 1987 Con-Expo show—which only representatives from corporations, farms, and customers typically attended—by saying that he was talking "to prospective customers and dealers…about the quality product that you build and the pride you exhibit in your work…We want to **keep our jobs here**, not to lose to Komatsu or any other earth-moving equipment corporation." Responding to requests from some members to wear plaid ribbons as an expression of solidarity with their Scottish counterparts, Green refused. "There is very little sympathy on my part. I have a hard time getting upset over a country which now has jobs (873) that were once ours," Green explained. "I will not wear a plaid ribbon for them. I am concerned with **our** plant closings. We should be concerned with our members

[90] Charles Woolfson and John Foster, *Track Record: The Story of the Caterpillar Occupation* (London: Verso, 1988), 127. John Brannan, a union leader and one of the leaders of the factory takeover, is quoted as having spoken with "Anderson of the United Auto Workers (UAW) who met Caterpillar industrial relations people in Peoria." This may well have been Andy Anderson, who was a committeeman for local 974, and was also involved in ESP. If so, it illustrates some of the complexities of class consciousness during this period—how unionists could at once sympathize with other Caterpillar workers around the world battling the company, and work with that same company in a jointness program to try to save jobs in the US.

whom we represent, not Scotland or any other foreign country. If a ribbon should be worn, it should be for our members who have lost their jobs due to the plant closings."

Green's unsympathetic stance toward the Scottish and other foreign workers reflects the ways in which nationalism and especially competition within a corporation for jobs divided workers. Green resented that Scottish workers called their American counterparts "greedy" when on strike against Caterpillar in 1983. In turn, when the Uddingston factory re-opened in 1984 performing work formerly done in East Peoria, Scottish workers opened crates of parts and found notes calling them "Tartan scabs" and dirty Scottish coolies."[91] Even though workers in Scotland and Peoria faced similar socioeconomic problems, national divisions and fears of unemployment prevented them from effectively uniting to solve their shared dilemma.

Discourses of Nation and Race at Work: "Gung Ho"

Ron Howard's "Gung Ho" (1986) presented an alternative to battling Japan, America's economic enemy—teamwork between managers and workers. Set in fictional Hadleyville, Pennsylvania, it portrays the effort of the town to re-open and operate shuttered auto factory under its new Japanese owner, Assan Motors. The protagonist is not an auto worker but rather a foreman, Hunt Stevenson (Michael Keaton), who convinces Assan's leaders to re-open the factory under certain conditions—no union, wage reductions, higher productivity standards, and cross-training in different jobs. Promoted to be a liaison between the workforce and the Japanese factory manager Oishi Kazahiro (Gedde Watanabe), Stevenson tries in vain to improve productivity and workers' morale.

Under pressure from Kazahiro, who like Stevenson is only in Hadleyville as a last-ditch attempt to salvage his career with Assan, Stevenson makes a deal for the factory to produce

[91] Tony Green, "President's Report," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 35, No. 2, February 20, 1987, 5; emphasis in the original; Gary Putka, "Jobs Lost at U.S. Caterpillar Plant Go to Scotland," *Wall Street Journal*, April 10, 1985, 32.

15,000 cars in a month—the same as Assan's top-producing factory in Japan—in exchange for more jobs and wage increases. When Stevenson approaches the workforce with the plan, they balk, claiming such numbers are impossible. As the crowd grows hostile, Stevenson lies and claims that for 13,000 cars in a month, they would get part of the raise. Despite working unpaid overtime and weekends, workers fall short of the goal and, when Stevenson admits his lie, they strike, prompting threats from Assan to close. Taking matters literally into their own hands, Stevenson and Kazahiro resume the task of making cars to meet the production goal. Seeing their error of their selfish ways, workers end their strike and join the beleaguered managers at work. An inspection by Assan's top managers revealed that some cars were not finished and fell apart. Yet Assan's tough CEO, Mr. Sakamato, impressed by their efforts and improvement, agrees to keep the plant open and grants wage increases.

"Gung Ho" acts as a cultural and racial foil to economic competition that, in the U.S., was increasingly characterized in militaristic rhetoric. The movie presented cross-cultural cooperation and understanding instead of murderous vengeance as a solution to America's problems. Workers salvaged their jobs, helped save their town, and warmed up to the Japanese managerial style in the end, with workers performing morning exercises as the film ends. Like Stevenson, Kazahiro is portrayed as a sympathetic figure—harried by Assan's executives, facing constant pressure to meet high standards, under stress, and expressing emotion. In the process, the film succeeds in breaking through stereotypes of Japanese people and culture as rigid and stoic.

However, it is especially in its portrayal of the auto workers that "Gung Ho" fails. With managers as the main characters, the movie lapses into stereotypes of working-class people by presenting them as reactionary, short-sighted, self-centered, and vindictive. Anger over

Stevenson's lies and not the brokered speed-up is what fuels the impromptu strike, which the workers end not because the town needs the factory, but because the two managers—one of whom lied to them and both of whom drove them relentlessly—set an inspiring and individualized example of teamwork. It is less out of concern for their health and safety and more out of willful resistance that the auto workers refuse to consider making 15,000 cars in a month. And when they do attempt to meet the higher quota, not only do they fail, but they also attempt to mask their failure with shoddy work, thus invoking the image of the lazy union worker who cuts corners and is indifferent to quality.

During a company baseball game intended to bring together workers and managers and bridge the cultural divide, Buster (George Wendt of "Cheers" fame), a disgruntled and popular worker on the line, sends Kazahiro sprawling with a body blow, eliciting sympathy from Stevenson and the audience. The scene is revealing, for it exemplifies how rarely the film portrays the auto workers in a sympathetic light. By telling the story from the standpoint of managers, the film fails to explain why workers in the shop might resist a speed up, why they might distrust what management tells them, or how shop-floor culture, workplace experiences, and identities such as class, gender, nation, race, and community might have shaped their behavior. Workers in "Gung Ho" do not act with any apparent purpose, perspicacity, or strategy, but rather out of anger, pettiness, and off the cuff. It is the managers in the movie who present new ideas, take charge, and convince workers of their need to adapt to new circumstances, while workers resist at every turn until the end, when they see that change from above and across the ocean is for their own good.

"Gung Ho" also raises yet leaves unresolved a deep dilemma affecting people across national and cultural lines in the late twentieth century—the pressures of industrial life and

market forces on working people. It offers employee-employer teamwork as a tonic for cultural conflict and unemployment. But by submerging shop-floor stress and international competition under a storyline of cooperation, "Gung Ho" offers a simple solution to complex problems. At the film's end, one wonders if workers will continue to toil at the new, elevated production rates in exchange for their raises, what physical and psychological toll those standards would have exacted on their bodies, if the plant remained open, and where Assan Motors stood in the intensely competitive auto market. Instead, it depicts workers performing fitness exercises before work to deal with the rigors of labor, and managers and workers at peace if not happy after ironing out their disputes, having conquered the film's twin enemies of cultural stereotypes and class conflict.

"Gung Ho" circulated among area theaters for just four weeks. Nationally, it grossed just over $36 million.[92] However, what it did was to reinforce important ideas during this tumultuous period. "Gung Ho" conveyed to audiences the stark threat that deindustrialization posed for working-class communities, forcing difficult decisions that, in the 1980s, had significant economic, political, and cultural implications for workers. In particular, workers were encouraged to adapt to new times, to embrace change however reluctant they might be about its implications, and to consider new strategies for success in a more competitive global economy. In the process, "Gung Ho" submerged class identification and class differences under the tropes of nationalism, foreign economic competition, and cross-class cooperation.

Crucially, "Gung Ho" popularized discourses that imparted the importance of defeating a common enemy, and becoming one's other to do so. For Stevenson, it required learning new ways to increase productivity from Japanese executives and, in the process, defeat the enemies of unemployment and shop-floor strife at home. These discourses in popular culture echoed those

[92] *Peoria Journal-Star*, March 14-April 4, 1986, C4-5.

emanating from Caterpillar and within the UAW, offering workers who were threatened with unemployment and foreign competition a way to save their jobs and preserve their status as a "blue collar elite," and focusing their animosity on the Japanese as both the source and solution of their problems.

Fissures on the Shop Floor

Despite the initial promise and allure of ESP programs that were intended to improve labor-management relations, they instead deteriorated the spirit of unionism and the system of job-control unionism that had prevailed among workers at Caterpillar. ESP teams inculcated the need for workers to accept change in the workplace, particularly through cross-training into other jobs to utilize workers more flexibly. However, extensive shop-floor rearrangement through PWAF programs that union leaders and ESP teams touted as beneficial for the seniority-laden workforce upset workplace dynamics developed over long periods of time. Workers wary of jointness and multi-skilled operations were now interspersed with others who embraced jointness and cross-training with the hope of saving their jobs. With local union leadership supportive of ESP programs, workers opposed to jointness failed to develop methods and networks necessary for organized resistance, resorting most often to non-participation in ESP and shunning its adherents.

ESP intensified the regimentation of work by smoothing the transition to lean production. The improvements in parts and materials handling kept workers at their cell stations longer, focused on jobs that became increasingly repetitious through automation. Cross-training and reductions in job classifications allowed management to utilize fewer workers for multiple tasks, while offering overtime to employees as others remained laid off. At the same time, the company's newfound latitude on the shop floor allowed them to introduce new machinery that

increased the number of tasks workers were expected to perform, calling into question the degree to which employee satisfaction came with changes to the job process that developing a "Plant With a Future" mandated.

Management-by-stress fomented tensions between workers on the lean, "team-oriented" production floor. Extensive cross-training and people transferring departments and jobs in the hope of avoiding layoffs confronted animosity from others whose friends and relatives were laid off instead. Such shop floor shuffling resulted in heated exchanges and even fights between co-workers. In one instance, Donald Guthrie, a long-time employee in Building LL in East Peoria, and Ricky Frye, a transfer from nearby Mapleton, lost their jobs after fighting when Guthrie complained to Frye, "…you sons of a bitch come up here from Mapleton and take over our jobs and work all the overtime."[93]

Collaboration with management also opened for management avenues into skills and knowledge that before jointness had largely been workers' domain. ESP members worked with company engineers to update job process cards, providing management with knowledge of shortcuts in assembly and corrections in tooling to the company's outdated information. To accomplish this, ESP groups circulated information sheets to employees, asking them to detail their job responsibilities in the event of absence of manpower shortages. When Mike Legel refused to fill out the sheets, expressing his concern that management would use the information against them someday, the company set up a video camera at his work station in the Technical Center the following day to record his work processes.[94]

---

[93] Arbitration Award, Case Nos. GS-87-P-001, Donald Guthrie and GS-87-P-002, Ricky Frye, 2, Agricultural Implement (Caterpillar), Lot #6, Box 3, Local 974 Discharge—Guthrie GS-87-P-001 file, ALUA-WSU. See also Arbitrator's Award, Case Nos. PA-87-P-006 Discharge—Goeken and PA-87-P-007 Discharge—Beck, Agricultural Implements Department, UAW Local 974 Arbitration Cases, Lot 6, Box 4, ALUA-WSU.

[94] Mike Legel Interview at the Tremont Public Library, October 23, 2006. Steve Frakes and Jim O'Connor also attested to the company's videotaping employees to obtain a deeper understanding of job processes.

Perhaps the ultimate indignity for UAW members occurred upon their return to work in April 1992, after the first unsuccessful strike. Returning strikers saw informational booklets near machines that detailed job processes for potential replacement workers, whom the company had been interviewing to replace strikers. ESP participants recognized information gleaned from their lengthy meetings with management. It is unclear when Caterpillar realized that the information it gathered from workers could be used against them in a strike, but it is reasonable to conclude that at some point during its experience with jointness, probably around the time that it negotiated the Morton Parts agreement in 1988, Caterpillar determined that workers' sharing information about their jobs would allow the company, in the event of a strike, to operate their factories without the UAW. According to 974 President Jerry Brown, the company also utilized the information workers shared to facilitate opening new factories, including in North Carolina.[95] Not only was workers' often-exclusive knowledge no longer their own to harbor or dispense as they pleased. Through the veneer of jointness and competition, fueled by nationalism and stoked by the tangible fears of losing the best remaining industrial jobs in Peoria, workers saw their knowledge used against them as a cudgel for corporate concessions inflicted upon them through long, painful, and ultimately losing strikes through the 1990s.

Conclusion

Reflecting upon Local 974's involvement in ESP, Jerry Brown shook his head and said bitterly, "We got suckered in by ESP, no doubt about it." Caterpillar's bold antiunion move would not have been possible years before, when the UAW and the spirit of unionism solidarity among workers were stronger. These mainstays of unionism decayed over time, and the roots of decay lay before the difficult political and economic climate unions and workers faced in the 1980s, and hastened the defeats of the 1990s. The gains that the UAW and Local 974 earned

[95] Jerry Brown Interview at his home, Tremont, IL, April 3, 2007.

through contractualism glossed over internal conditions and tensions that became untenable as America's political and economic topography shifted. Unions and unionism lacked more than the ability to summon strength to the streets against companies. The solidarity that had built and undergirded industrial unionism no longer galvanized many within their own ranks, who were increasingly fearful of losing the best-paying jobs in the area. As a result, contractualism between the UAW and Caterpillar died not through the intense strife of the 1990s, but rather through jointness programs and the veneer of cooperation in the late 1980s. As the next chapter shows, Caterpillar's anti-union offensive eventually rolled back much of what the UAW had won over the years, inflicting on Local 974 mortal wounds to unionism—a two-tier wage system, longer work days with no overtime, a re-disciplined workplace, and a return to at-will employment characteristic of pre-NLRA labor relations with the right to hire temporary workers with neither the right to union representation nor job security—that other American corporations, especially in auto, have since emulated.

Chapter 4: 'Peoria Is Still a Company Town:' Parameters of Class Community, and Nation, 1991-1995

In the period between the two long strikes of the 1990s, labor relations between the UAW and Caterpillar generally, and between UAW workers and shop-floor representatives and Caterpillar supervisors specifically, deteriorated to an all-time low. Faced with Cat's threat to permanently replace its members in April 1992, the union returned to work without a contract and humbled by the loss in the 163-day strike. Deeply resentful of the company's threat and determined to roll back Caterpillar's demands for deep contractual concessions, the UAW shifted course, forgoing its militant legacy forged on picket lines and adopting aggressive in-plant and broader corporate campaigns against the Peoria-based company. These produced frequent, heated confrontations with management over everything from the pace and rules of work, to freedoms of speech and expression in the workplace, all of which reshaped class, gender, and national identities for blue-collar industrial workers in the 1990s.

One such exchange illustrates how these tensions but also, and more importantly, issues of power, rights, and identities permeated the shop floor at Caterpillar. In the Spring of 1994, electrician Jerry Monday opposed what he considered an inappropriate work assignment in the Mapleton Foundry. After failing to resolve the issue to his satisfaction with his supervisor, Ken Clark, Monday sought out the plant engineering manager. After learning about Monday's meeting with the engineering manager, Clark expressed his displeasure with Monday's going over his head. "This is America," Monday said. "You can talk to whoever you want." Clark responded, "This is Caterpillar. America starts outside the fence."[1]

This exchange reveals much about the shifting terrain on which workers and management, the UAW and Caterpillar, fought for power. Workers and management fiercely

[1] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 3, No. 5, June 1994, 12.

defended what they considered to be their rights and prerogatives on the shop floor, each repeatedly contesting the authority of the other. The argument between Clark and Monday also conveys more than dueling interpretations of a job assignment. It shows that the workplace was a crucial site in which ideas of rights, freedom, and nation as well as power were hotly contested. Importantly, it reveals a chasm between spaces of work and community—real and constructed—that were central to not only the lives and identities of working-class Americans, but also the outcome of perhaps the most important labor dispute of the 1990s.

This chapter strives to widen the analysis that authors have thus far offered on the UAW-Caterpillar strikes of the 1990s. While amply illustrating the importance of the dispute, its consequences for the UAW and organized labor, and the strategies involved, these have primarily confined themselves to examining labor relations and the events of the strikes. Using archival materials such as strike and company publications, and oral histories, this chapter locates shop floor events in the ideas and discourses underlying them, as fundamental to understanding the re-emergence of intense class consciousness among workers in the 1990s immediately following a period of labor-management collaboration in the late 1980s. Additionally, it examines how the dispute shaped and was shaped by the local community, and how labor internationalism re-emerged in the 1990s, in ways histories of the strikes have overlooked.[2]

[2] Stephen Franklin, *Three Strikes: Labor's Heartland Losses and What They Mean for Working Americans* (NY: The Guilford Press, 2001); Isaac Cohen, "The Caterpillar Labor Dispute and the UAW, 1991-1998," *Labor Studies Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Winter 2003), 77-99; Victor G. Devinatz, "A Heroic Defeat: The Caterpillar Labor Dispute and the UAW, 1991-1998," *Labor Studies Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Summer 2005), 1-18. For an unabashedly antiunion take on the UAW strike and in-plant tactics, see Columbus R. Gangemi and Joseph J. Torres, "The Corporate Campaign at Caterpillar," *Journal of Labor Research*, Volume XVII, Number 3 (Summer 1996), 377-394.

"The PATCO of the 1990s:" Cat Instigates the Strike

When the UAW struck Caterpillar in November 1991, it was conducting a defensive and, initially, limited stoppage against the company. Negotiations hardly proceeded past the initial stage of exchanging proposals, with each side holding fast and refusing to budge. The company was determined to divorce itself from the decades-old practice of pattern bargaining that existed between itself, industrial rivals John Deere, Case, and Navistar (formerly International Harvester), and the UAW. It also emphasized localism by arguing that the 1991 negotiations should shift from a predominately national agreement for Cat workers, to one that moved more contractual provisions into local agreements. Bargaining locally instead of nationally over issues such as wage increases and overtime rules risked drastically reducing the union's power to use its collective strength to pressure Cat on those and other key issues. The timing of this demand was also crucial because, in 1990, Cat had reorganized its factories into seventeen decentralized, semi-autonomous divisions along product lines that now faced considerable cost and production pressures.[3] By moving much of what was negotiated nationally—such as wage increases and overtime rules—into locally negotiated agreements, the company would be able to pit one factory against another for work and new products they developed. This also threatened to whipsaw local workers by taking contractual terms that favored the company, and pushing for such terms in other future agreements elsewhere.

Cat demanded that the UAW agree to increases in wages and pension benefits in exchange for widespread and ultimately fatal concessions. Cat wanted to eliminate contractual provisions protecting jobs, insisting on the right to not replace workers who retired, quit, or were fired—to let the job die with the vacancy—to reduce the workforce. It wanted more flexible

[3] William R. Haycraft, *Yellow Steel: The Story of the Earthmoving Equipment Industry* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 308-309.

scheduling to avoid paying overtime for more than eight hours of work per day. It proposed a two-tier wage and benefit structure that would grandfather higher pay and better benefits for long-term workers at the expense of new employees, who would begin earning about seventy percent of what more senior employees would. Additionally, these new workers would begin as temporary employees whose wages would only escalate if the company made them full-time workers. In effect, these proposals would not only create two-tier wage and benefit structures within Cat factories and among unionized workers, but would also undermine traditional contractual practices, embedded within union security clauses, by which new hires immediately became dues-paying union members. In essence, new hires could only become union members at the company's discretion. Such concessions threatened more than the significant gains in wages, benefits, and job control that the UAW had earned through negotiations and frequent strikes. It also threatened the union's long-term existence at Caterpillar, while holding out the possibility that other companies—especially those with UAW members—might seek to emulate Cat's bold moves.[4]

Jerry Brown, UAW local 974 president at the time, said he was less surprised by the contractual squabble than by the depth of the concessionary demands. "By around late '89," he said, "it was clear we were going to have some problems" in the 1991 round of negotiations. When meeting with plant managers on union business, Brown recalled some telling him off the record that "there is some bad stuff coming down."[5] In the summer of 1991, Cat angered the UAW by unilaterally eliminating its 200 unionized janitorial staff, then subcontracting the jobs to a nonunion firm paying $7 an hour. This incensed the union because, according to Brown, "a whole lot of those people were people they (Cat) had maimed in industrial accidents, then moved

[4] Franklin, *Three Strikes*, 8-9; Cohen, "The Caterpillar Labor Dispute and the UAW," *Labor Studies Journal*, 83.
[5] Jerry Brown Interview at his home, Tremont, IL, April 3, 2007.

into janitors jobs."[6] The move appeared to Brown and others an attempt by Cat to shirk any responsibility for long-term and injured workers. More importantly, eliminating jobs by subcontracting portended trouble for the union because it suggested the company could do this to other, larger bargaining units.

The UAW refused these demands, insisting in return that Cat adhere to the system of pattern bargaining that had provided wage and benefit gains at Deere without the steep concessions Cat demanded. It was also appalled that Cat had taken out advertisements in local papers and, close to the contract's deadline, directly mailed leaflets to employees touting the benefits of its proposals. Differentiating itself from other companies in the pattern with UAW, Cat argued that, as a company that "competes on a global basis from a primarily U.S. manufacturing base," its labor costs "already [we]re at a disadvantage compared to most of our primary competitors" such as Japanese manufacturer Komatsu.[7]

Cat started running these ads in February, over eight months before the strike began, providing the Peoria community with ample information about its side of the story. Throughout the remainder of the struggle, the company advertised heavily in local newspapers and on television. Consistent with its approach to community relations from the 1950s onward, Cat connected local jobs and the health of the Peoria economy with the need to compete in foreign markets with large, bold headlines reading "$3.4 Billion in Exports Means 18,500 U.S. Jobs at Cat."[8]

As the end of October approached and the UAW's strike deadline loomed, Cat repeatedly attacked the union's adherence to pattern bargaining, portraying it as archaic, costly, and

[6] Patt Johnson, "Union Chief Blasts Cat," *Peoria Journal-Star*, August 31, 1991, 1; Brown Interview.
[7] Track Type Tractor Business Unit pamphlet, October 21, 1991, UAW Region 4, Box 15, Caterpillar News Clippings folder, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs—Wayne State University—hereafter ALUA-WSU; emphasis in the original. See also Track Type Tractor Business Unit pamphlet, October 28, 1991; Track Type Tractor Business Unit pamphlet, November 19, 1991, UAW Region 4, Box 15, Caterpillar News Clippings, ALUA-WSU.
[8] "$3.4 Billion in Exports means 18,500 U.S. Jobs at Cat," *Peoria Journal-Star*, February 17, 1991, cited in "Ad Series Begins," *Caterpillar Folks*, Vol. XLI, No. 4, March 1, 1991, 3, January 20, 1989 to April 26, 1991 Box, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library—hereafter ALPL.

inapplicable to the realities of global market competition. Flyers described pattern bargaining as a relic of the past when "Caterpillar and its competitors were similar." New, foreign competitors demanded a new, "flexible" approach that, to Cat, required new contractual structures. The company sent employees charts that showed net losses that GM and Ford suffered in 1991, it distinguished itself from the auto giants and market, where pattern bargaining had also existed for decades, with language that equated pattern bargaining with the death knell of American industry. "Pattern agreements may be fine for car manufacturers who choose to run on empty," an October 28, 1991 ad warned. "Caterpillar is from a different industry and we want to stay in business by being competitive." Ads and flyers asserted that its competition was essentially foreign, and especially from Komatsu.[9]

Peoria braced itself for the first strike at Cat since the 206-day 1982-83 strike, which remained fresh in people's memories. A lengthy editorial in the Labor Day edition of the *Journal Star* reflected the anxiety pervading the area. "Caterpillar and the entire central Illinois economy scuffled along for more than three years after that 1982-83 strike," the *Journal-Star* opined. "Men, women and children suffered badly. Families broke up. People lost their homes. Some lost their lives." As a reminder to the union and company mired in the stalemate, the paper admonished the two sides to consider the impact a strike would have on the surrounding community. "What happens at Caterpillar affects every supplier, every central Illinois government, every grocer, doctor, builder, retailer. Every individual living or working within a 50- mile radius of Peoria will feel the effects of a prolonged walkout."[10] Peoria's collective eyes, the paper attested, would be fixed upon the simmering conflict.

[9] Track Type Tractor Business Unit flyers, October 15 and October 28, 1991, UAW Region 4 Collection, Box 15, Caterpillar News Clippings File; "Our Competition Is NOT U.S. Based," memo to Caterpillar employees, November 19, 1991, UAW Region 4, CATERPILLAR folder, ALUA-WSU.
[10] "The Cat-UAW Contract," editorial, *Peoria Journal-Star*, September 2, 1991, A4.

Each side had many supporters and detractors, reflecting a chasm in the community that only widened with the strike. Many of those critical of the UAW echoed Cat's accusations that the UAW needed to conform to the more intensely competitive 1990s. One Peorian penned an editorial that left the UAW little choice regarding what was necessary for Peoria, declaring "Nobody likes to give up anything they have worked hard over the years to earn. The realities of the 1990s, however, with vastly increased foreign competition leave no option. We must earn the right to be No. 1 in the world again..." With a headline "If UAW Wins, Peoria Loses" that cast UAW gains as inimical to the local economy, the author invoked the decline of International Harvester as a harbinger of what might come if the UAW emerged victorious. The recent announcement of Deere closing the East Moline foundry and the potential loss of 575 jobs is indicative of things to come. Caterpillar has made every effort to stay in Peoria but if saddled with unrealistic production costs, they will have no choice but to create jobs elsewhere."[11] Invoking the specter of foreign competition, this and other editorials from Peorians contended that the existence of local jobs outweighed their terms, that having jobs at all was better than maintaining well-paying ones. They indicated an acceptance of the logic of capitalism to seek out the cheapest labor markets, while also implying that, should Cat win, the same number of jobs would remain at local Cat factories.

Workers countered that it was Cat that was making unrealistic demands, and framed their union's stance as one asserting a good standard of living as a worker's right. "The company wants to take away too much from us," said Mike Bannister, a Cat worker of nineteen years the first night of the strike. "We have to stand up for our rights. We are fighting for our livelihood."[12]

[11] Lowell (Bud) Grieves, "Facing Reality: If UAW Wins, Peoria Loses," *Peoria Journal-Star*, September 28, 1991, A4.
[12] Sherry Mannery, Clare Howard, Jeff Ostrowski, "Pickets Go Up at EP Plant," *Peoria Journal-Star*, November 4, 1991, A1.

Others, however, felt stuck in the middle, sympathetic to Cat's recent losses but equally mindful of the insecurities that layoffs brought them. One Morton worker urged compromise from both sides: "This company is not in the best financial condition. The UAW loses membership every day. If either are to survive, common sense tells me both must make hard compromises."[13]

Rather than strike all Cat factories at once, the UAW opted instead for a "selective strike" strategy with members going out only at the East Peoria and Decatur plants on November 4. Those UAW members still working would contribute an hour of pay per week, in addition to their normal union dues deductions, to help offset the strike funds the UAW would pay to those on strike. However, shortly thereafter Cat locked out most other UAW workers but kept its parts facility in Morton, IL near Peoria, open through an agreement it made with the UAW in 1989. Persuaded by the company's promise to increase jobs and secure local employment, Jerry Brown said that the UAW yielded crucial contractual ground to Cat by voting to allow workers at Morton, a vital parts manufacturing and distribution center that serviced Caterpillar plants and dealers worldwide, to work 120 days after the expiration of the contract—even if the UAW went on strike.[14] When Cat negotiated the Morton Parts agreement, it is quite reasonable to deduce that the company was planning for a future strike. Morton Parts supplied Cat factories and its extensive dealer network around the world with parts not just for manufacturing but also for replacing defective parts on products already sold and in use. Thus, the agreement allowing Morton employees to work during a strike could—and did—allow the company to produce, make money, and serve a wide array of customers. It represented more than a strategic blunder by Local 974. Fully two years before the 1991-1992 strike, the company—as it touted cooperation and a mutuality of long-term interests with the union through ESP—planned and

[13] Leslie M. Roark, "Time to Compromise," editorial, *Peoria Journal-Star*, September 28, 1991, A4.
[14] Brown Interview.

laid the groundwork for dividing the UAW during a strike. It did so not by finding ways around the union, but rather through it, negotiating the agreement with 974's leadership that espoused ESP.[15]

The 974 membership on the whole was lukewarm about the selective strike strategy. Dave Dearing, a twenty-three year employee at the time of the strike, argued that East Peoria was vital to shut down because one of its buildings, SS, assembled parts for tractors. "If you can't put the parts together, you can't have a tractor," Dearing said. Bill Hyde concurred, contending that it would mitigate the effects of a full-scale strike on Peoria while still hurting Cat. "It's smart. For one thing," he said, "it's not going to completely trash out the economy of the cities and it's going to slow down Caterpillar." Yet some felt that the local selected the wrong factories to close. Jim Hamp, a twenty-four year worker at Cat's Mossville Engine facility, felt that Mossville should have struck, for "All of the engines come out of this place." Others believed that a selective strike flouted the local's long-standing tradition of solidarity. Judy Krueger, whose husband worked at Building SS in East Peoria, "If one walks, they should all walk. Union brothers are supposed to be union brothers."[16]

Because of slow customer demand worldwide, as well as its global manufacturing base, Caterpillar had enough machinery on hand to supply customers through most of the strike, allowing it to wait out the union. This only amplified unrest among workers and the community as the strike continued through the cold winter months. The financial strain of the strike took its toll on the membership, especially since members on strike or locked out received only $100 in strike benefits per week.

[15] Ibid.
[16] Mannery, Howard, Ostrowski, "Pickets Go Up at EP Plant," *Peoria Journal-Star*, November 4, 1991, A1.

As the strike and lockout dragged on, the more vocal the criticism focused on the union leadership. Some 974 members reflected an abiding distrust in the International and its interests, blaming Bill Casstevens for "caring for himself and Detroit autoworkers" rather than Cat workers, and accusing Jerry Brown and 974 bargaining chair Jerry Baker of being "puppets" under Casstevens' control.[17] One long editorial by 974 member Richard Owens—who later crossed the union's picket line to work—echoed Cat's terminology by terming pattern bargaining "an antiquated idea that is no longer realistic in the world of multinational corporations." Adherence to it, Owens claimed, would only hasten the "inevitable process" of "losing more of its members" as companies like Cat sought cheaper labor elsewhere. Expressing his indifference to whether or not "contractual issues are negotiated centrally or locally," Owens urged the UAW to focus on "job security." At the same time, Owens blamed Cat for refusing to respect the UAW, and for the "adversarial relationship" between the two sides by urging Cat to 'bargain instead of dictate" as a path to "a new partnership" with the union.[18]

The UAW also faced ominous new threats from the company. In early February, Cat had hired Vance International Protection Services, a security firm from Virginia, to supply the company with military-style security guards. Outfitted in military boots and dark jumpsuits that more closely resembled soldiers' uniforms than the informal appearance of company' security personnel, Vance guards had backgrounds in police and military forces, and had been used in other labor disputes, including by mine companies in West Virginia. Stationed atop and around Cat's factories, Vance personnel conducted surveillance on strikers, gathering evidence of any picket-line infractions against strikers.[19]

[17] Joe Rapp, "Enough Is Enough!" editorial, *Peoria Journal-Star*, January 11, 1992, A4.
[18] Richard Owens, "Cat, UAW Must Bend," editorial, *Peoria Journal-Star,* January 11, 1992, A4.
[19] Franklin, *Three Strikes*, 95-101.

Yet their presence as a collection of burly, uniformed, all-male, and militaristic security officers was also meant to intimidate strikers, themselves mostly male and unaccustomed to such a presence during strikes.[20] Later, after the first strike had ended, Vance guards appeared inside the factories during disciplinary meetings, representing a further militarization of the workplace through intimidation.[21] Strikers and their spouses claimed that Vance guards did more than intimidate them, threatening bodily harm by firing random shots near strikers. Several 974 members reported bullets whizzing past them in early March, notifying the police and prompting a temporary court order that prohibited Vance guards from wearing firearms. Company assertions that Vance guards did not carry firearms did not persuade strikers. While picketing outside Cat's Mossvile factory, Frank Ronzani swore that a bullet sailed past him. "I am a combat veteran of Vietnam," Ronzani said ". . . I know the sound of bullets." The following day, Delores Knapp, the wife of a UAW member, was driving past the Mossville factory to the store when she heard gun shots. "I kept on driving for two or three seconds and then realized that I just had been shot at," said Knapp.[22]

The threats to the livelihood of union members went beyond picket-line harassment. When its supplies began to run low in late March 1992, Cat took the unprecedented step of mailing letters to workers indicating that they had one week to return—or risk being permanently replaced. When the company advertised for workers, it said it received 40,000 calls from across the country. As it screened applications for employment, the UAW and its members panicked, with at least 1,000 UAW members crossing their own picket lines in East Peoria and other factories. This was unheard of among Cat workers, who were historically militant and did not

[20] For more on the role of strikebreakers, and especially presentations of masculinity through violence against workers, see Stephen H. Norwood, *Strikebreaking and Intimidation: Mercenaries and Masculinity in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
[21] Mike Legel Interview at the Tremont Public Library, October 23, 2006.
[22] Sarah Okeson, "Judge Bans Concealed Guns at Cat," *Peoria Journal-Star*, March 10, 1992, A1.

cross their own lines, even during the 206-day strike from 1982-1983, when unemployment rates in Peoria hovered around nineteen percent. Yet the UAW and organized labor had been considerably cowed in the interim. Between 1981 and 1991, the UAW lost fully one-third of its members and, by the end of the first strike in April 1992, the percentage of workers in unions nationwide was down to about sixteen percent.[23] The UAW unilaterally agreed to return to work, and Cat would stop screening applicants, while the two sides would resume bargaining.[24]

The possibility of being replaced permanently was no idle threat for Cat workers. With the average hourly wage at $15-18 per hour, far above most other workers in factory towns and more than double what workers often earned in service and retail work, there was no shortage of people willing to cross UAW's picket line and take their jobs.[25] With the average age of strikers at about forty-eight, many of whom had families, home mortgages, and car payments that their good-paying, unionized jobs allowed them to afford, they had much to lose if permanently replaced. Even staunch union supporters thought long and hard about whether or not to stay on strike, fearing the loss of the best factory jobs in the area. John Clayton, a striker with 25 years of seniority at the time of the strike, chose to stay on strike but admitted it was a tough decision, for "I don't think I can get a job nowhere else, making the money I'm making." His wife worked full time as a nurse's assistant and, to supplement his modest strike benefits, Clayton also worked as a janitor at a local tavern during the strike.[26] The lack of other options was not lost on Cat. Drawing upon the lack of other alternatives in Peoria for most workers, Caterpillar

[23] Barry Bearak, "After a Long Tug of War, Labor Slips," *Los Angeles Times*, May 14, 1995, A16.
[24] Devinatz, "Heroic Defeat," 3; Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor), Vol. 30, No. 1, January 1983, 134.
[25] *Illinois Wage Survey for Region 4 and Peoria Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area* (SMSA) and U.S. Department, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Report on Employment, Hours and Earnings, State of Illinois, Peoria 1985-93*.
[26] Dean Olsen, "Now It's Getting Scary For Families," *Peoria Journal-Star*, April 2, 1992, A1.

increased the threat of imposing its two-tier contract through a regional—indeed national—two-tier wage disparity between union and non-union workers.

Rank-and-file resentment toward the company ran deep and, in many instances, was permanent after the 1991-1992 strike. Mike Legel, a UAW member in the Technical Center, severed his psychological ties with Caterpillar years before his actual retirement. He recalled discussing his future at Cat with his wife after the UAW lost the first strike:

> She said, 'OK, so you had said that you wouldn't go back, that you would quit before you'd go back. So what are you going to do?'…And I said…since I've been involved with the union, what I think I'm going to do is I'm going to go back in, but in my mind, I've quit Caterpillar and I've started my job with the union. And from that day forward, that's what I was there for. I had figured that eventually, I was either not going to have a job or they were going to fire me or shoot me or whatever they did, but I just was not, and I still will not just lay down and let people steal your dignity that way.[27]

Strikers were as much, if not more, resentful toward fellow union members who crossed their own picket lines. Taunting their co-workers with the epithet "scab," strikers assembled the names of as many line-crossers as possible and circulated them to other strikers. Steve Frakes, a welder at Cat who began working at Cat in 1974, crossed the picket line in part because he was concerned about paying for his daughter's heart condition. The company stopped paying workers' health insurance during the strike. After strikers returned to work, Frakes was treated rather harshly.

> [W]e had lockers there to store our personal equipment and you could put your lunch pail in there…If they weren't welding the padlock on the locker, they were filling it with lock tight. My equipment, the company equipment would be sabotaged. When I came in…I had to spend a half hour checking all the equipment over… I had a noose, a hangman's noose left hanging over my locker.

Outside work was no better for him or his family:

> We actually had a car that came to the house one night and the guys are hollering, 'See scab, we know where you live' and this sort of thing, you know, in the driveway at ten or

[27] Legel Interview.

> eleven o'clock at night. Upon turning on some lights and stepping out the door, they leave abruptly. And I thoroughly figured that that would continue…but it was only the one time that they ever came to the house. But I always figured it had something to do with the fact that when I did open the door and step onto the porch, there was a 12-gauge in my hand. My kids were accosted at school. There's nothing any more painful than to have a ten-year-old girl come to you, 'Dad, what's a scab?[28]

Although Cat disciplined strikers who called line-crossers scabs, this failed to stop verbal, or even visual, harassment on the shop floor. Four workers in Pontiac bought the baseball caps of the Seattle Mariners (S), Chicago Cubs (C), Atlanta Braves (A), and Boston Red Sox (B), sat together, and walked abreast in and out of work spelling "SCAB" for all to see.[29]

The UAW International as well as Local 974 members also expressed deep resentment against Caterpillar for flouting the principles of joint labor-management programs at Cat in the 1980s by bargaining for concessions, and using the information gleaned from the Employee Satisfaction Process (ESP), the labor-management program at Cat, to scale back the size of the workforce. Soon after instituting the selective-strike strategy in late 1991, UAW representative Bill Casstevens criticized the company for its hard bargaining position and concessionary demands immediately after a period in which both the UAW and Cat had eschewed their long-standing adversarial relationship in favor of jointness. Local 974 publicity and education director Wayne Schmidt complained, "We taught them how to work better and smarter and with fewer people [through ESP] and now they want to eliminate jobs."[30]

After the loss of the strike, and the unprecedented picket-line defections and crossings of its own members, rank-and-file resentment toward the company for its about-face reversion to adversarialism also fueled widespread worker participation in the union's in-plant strategy starting soon after UAW members returned to their jobs in April 1992. Mike Steagall, a worker

[28] Steve Frakes Interview at McDonald's, Morton, IL, November 14, 2006.
[29] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 1, No. 1, June 1992, 8.
[30] Patt Johnson, "UAW: Members Would Reject 'Last Offer' if Asked," *Peoria Journal-Star*, September 17, 1992, B1.

and former ESP coordinator at the Mapleton Foundry, engaged in numerous shop-floor protest actions after the first strike and was one of 140 Mapleton workers briefly suspended on April 28, 1993 for wearing "PERMANENTLY REPLACE FITES" T-shirts. "We had thirty [ESP] teams. We had a lot of good ideas for cost savings. We had one team that saved $150,000 a year," Steagall said. "If they would come back and ask me to do it again, I'd say no. Not with what they've done to the union…There's too many scars…All the things we'd been taught to do in ESP, they did just the opposite. You're supposed to listen to people."[31]

The result was that many strikers, even those who had been involved in and led ESP programs, readily joined in the UAW's multi-pronged campaigns against Caterpillar. This entailed an in-plant work-to-rule campaign to disrupt production, and a widespread publicity campaign to discredit Caterpillar among long-standing and potential customers, stockholders, and the American public. Rank-and-file workers also complemented these International-directed campaigns with myriad and innovative media, shop floor, and community activities. For the first time in years, the corporate campaign tapped into the creativity and militant experiences of workers and their families, shifting the battleground from the picket line to multiple fronts—the workplace, Illinois's communities, state and national politics and, to a limited degree, labor unions across the nation and world.

Pressuring Cat from Within: The In-Plant Campaign

The most direct pressure tactic the UAW utilized was the work-to-rule strategy, by which workers would strictly adhere to the letter of their job classifications and guidelines to perform their jobs. This entailed summoning supervisors to work stations to review and approve work procedures, often before any production began. Rather than performing various job duties that

[31] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 2, No. 4, May 1993, 12; *UAW-Caterpillar Informational Bulletin*, no date, circa 1993, 14, ILIR Union Vertical Files, 1912-2001, Series 2 Automobile Workers, Box 13, Folder 13, University of Illinois Archives—hereafter ILIR UIA.

nearly all workers already knew from years of experience, employees who worked-to-rule relinquished to management the initiative to produce. This was a clear and essential reversal of fundamental day-to-day industrial life for Cat workers that usually entailed either their perusing job cards for particular tasks to be performed, or simply beginning to work based on the knowledge they accumulated. Industrial production at Caterpillar—indeed in most factories—inherently relies upon the knowledge of workers and the tacit presumption that, unless problems exist, they will begin to work and complete the required tasks before sending the finished item along to begin the process anew. Working-to-rule ceded the very impetus for production to management.

Workers no longer worked as management long presumed they would, and had. Instead, rank-and-file members bombarded foremen and supervisors with questions about job processes to be done, safety concerns to be addressed, and machine and parts problems to be examined and remedied. At other times, workers failed to alert management to low inventory levels, allowing parts to run out and thus halting work. With far more production workers than management personnel, assembly often slowed drastically or ground to a halt until management answered various production-related questions or summoned skilled mechanics—also UAW members—to rectify machinery workers claimed did not operate properly.

Caterpillar was particularly susceptible to a work-to-rule campaign after it implemented lean production strategies in the late 1980s. Rather than stockpiling large quantities of parts for assembly, some of which might sit unused for days or weeks, Caterpillar embraced lean production to drastically reduce inventory levels, curtail expenses, and streamline production processes and assembly time. The company drastically altered assembly lines by incorporating new, specialized and standardized tools and parts to be used on multiple products, thus allowing

multiple assembly lines to be collapsed into one. It also automated parts delivery systems and relocated them closer to assembly areas, reducing the time necessary for workers to retrieve them, thus keeping workers closer to their stations for assembly. Through ESP, employees met and worked closely with management to identify and eliminate quality and production problems. Essential to the system was "just-in-time" production, in which required parts only arrived to the shop floor as needed and in the number required, not in large, superfluous quantities. That is, inventory was pegged as closely as possible to what the company considered to be necessary under optimal circumstances, based on the presumptions that heightened quality consciousness would greatly reduce waste, and that the parts the company used contained no flaws. Additionally, Cat increasingly relied on component production, with workers assembling "bundled" parts that had often been individually attached to a product by more workers, thus reducing the number of workers required for assembly. Through "just-in-time" lean production, Caterpillar had by 1990 reduced the time required to assemble a tractor from four weeks to four days.[32]

However, lean production was designed to operate as an efficient, streamlined system using not only fewer employees, fewer parts, and less space but also and importantly, less *time* for assembly. Honed and perfected from the 1960s through the 1980s in Japan's factories, particularly in the auto industry, lean production flowed most smoothly when workers were convinced they had a say in industrial processes, and a financial and psychological stake in the company's well being. Working with management, often in employee-involvement programs, employees were imbued with the corporate-oriented psychology of saving money and time through a more efficient, quality-oriented assembly process in order to enhance the company's

[32] Karen A. Auguston, "Caterpillar Slashes Lead Time From Weeks to Days," *Modern Materials Handling*, February 1990, 50-51.

competitiveness and, at least in theory, their own security.[33] Lean production presumed that its various aspects—just-in-time assembly, employee-involvement, the psychology of efficiency and corporate competitiveness—would sufficiently and *consistently* motivate workers.[34] As the MIT International Motor Vehicle Program group stated, "to make a lean system with no slack—no safety net—work at all, it is essential that every worker try very hard."[35]

The UAW work-to-rule campaign at Cat struck at the core of lean production's presumptuous principles—that its multi-faceted structure and underlying psychology knitting workers to goals of efficiency and profit maximization—management objectives—would so thoroughly focus their attention on increasing productivity and improving quality as to erode workers' class consciousness. Fueled by anti-Cat animosity and reinvigorated with class consciousness by Cat's demands for concessions and threats to permanently replace them, workers created the very slack that lean production tried to eliminate. Within the first few months of the work-to-rule campaign, production at UAW-represented Cat plants was drastically reduced. Local 974 steward Mike Roth claimed that production in Cat's East Peoria complex had dropped 40% from pre-strike levels because "We're not doing anything the foreman didn't tell us to do." Construction equipment industry journal *Stark's Off-Highway Ledger* reported that Caterpillar "continues to fall considerably short of internally planned production targets," with production levels down 56% in East Peoria, 47% in Aurora, and 27% in Decatur.[36] In Aurora, management circulated a memo on August 6, 1992 to employees describing the previous month as "our worst month ever in terms of production. We missed our build targets by 71 tractors.

---

[33] John Price, "Lean Production at Suzuki and Toyota: a Historical Perspective," in Steve Babson ed., *Lean Work: Empowerment and Exploitation in the Global Auto Industry* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 81-107.
[34] Kim Moody, *Workers in a Lean World: Unions in the International Economy* (NY: Verso, 1997), 93-107.
[35] James P. Womack, Daniel T. Jones, and Daniel Roos, *The Machine that Changed the World* (NY: Rawson Associates, 1990), 102-103, quoted in Moody, *Workers in a Lean World*, 107.
[36] Quoted in *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 1, No. 4, Sept-Oct. 1992, 1-2; John Lippert, "UAW Has Hope in Caterpillar Slowdown," *Detroit Free-Press*, September 5, 1992, 1A.

That's the poorest performance in this plant's history…I think it's the worst month by any plant in the entire corporation's history."[37]

The union's in-plant strategy not only disrupted production but also relied on a galvanized and confrontational rank-and-file that challenged—and to a degree prompted—management decisions regarding discipline, job assignments, and free speech and expression at work. UAW members targeted Cat CEO Don Fites, who personified the company's aggressive demands for concessions and willingness to permanently replace strikers, many wore black T-shirts with bold white letters reading "PERMANENTLY REPLACE FITES." When Fites visited the York, Pennsylvania factory in August 1992, UAW picketers were waiting outside the plant entrance with pro-union signs and anti-Fites shirts. Workers circulated sketches that likened Cat's policies to South African apartheid. One such caricature showed Fites sitting behind a desk with two heads of workers—one a white woman and the other a black man—in chains mounted on the wall behind him, with a caption below Fites's desk reading, "What 3 things does [Sic.] America and S. Africa have in common? 1.) No National Health Plan 2.) The Right to Replace Strikers 3.) Mr & Mrs Donald Fites [Sic.]."[38]

The sketch discussed above is intriguing. It is impossible to know the race and gender of the artist, but whoever drew it used two images of workers—a white woman for America and a black man for South Africa—who comprised a distinct minority of the workforce at Cat's Illinois factories. In this particular sketch, the rendering personifies victimized workers enslaved by Cat's practices as gendered and racialized 'others,' not as the white men who were

[37] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 1, No. 3, August 1992, 3. The emphasis is possibly original to the article. Quoting a company memo from August 6, 1992 from which this quote was drawn, Jeremy Main's version contains the same language without the emphasis; Jeremy Main, *Quality Wars: The Triumphs and Defeats of American Business* (NY: The Free Press, 1994), 213.
[38] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 1, No. 4, Sept-Oct. 1992, 4; Fites Sketch, no date, Caterpillar Strike 1991-6, Box 13, Folder 11, ILIR UIA.

overwhelmingly the face of Cat workers. Its gendered assumptions about workers' victimization echo Local 974 bargaining committee member Jim Lippert's characterization of Caterpillar's contract proposal as "a rape."[39]

While such gendered and racialized images may have had purchase among many Cat workers, it is important not to over-generalize about how prevalent these perspectives were among a large, if rather homogeneous, workforce. While striving to uphold their status and dignity as skilled industrial workers, and quite often as the primary income for those with families, these mostly white male workers were just as apt to portray themselves with dehumanizing yet non-racialized, non-gendered images. Workers at rallies carried signs accusing the company of treating them "like dogs," depicting themselves as rolled over by Cat equipment, and as "casualties" of union-busting, and others.[40] This is not to diminish that Cat workers utilized gendered and racialized discourses to portray themselves as victims of aggressive anti-union behavior, but rather to situate such characterizations within various and parallel discourses of victimization workers used. At the same time, such discourses emerged from a workforce that, historically, had not fostered significant ties with community organizations such as the NAACP and others in Peoria that advanced the interests of people of color, and women.

Union members rallied in factories during lunch and breaks, and outside the plants before and after shifts. When a group from the Ukraine visited the East Peoria plant in late August 1992, scores of workers rallied outside, displaying signs in Russian and Ukranian.[41] During the

[39] Douglas Fruehling, "Strike is Over But Fight Isn't," *Peoria Journal-Star*, December 4, 1995, A1.
[40] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 1, No. 3, August 1992, 5; Volume 2, No. 4, May 1993, 4; Volume 3, No. 2, February 1994, 6.
[41] Accounts vary about the size of the rally, with the union's *Contract Action Times* asserting that "250 workers" rallied, while the *Peoria Journal-Star*'s account placed the number of workers present at about 75. *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 1, No. 4, Sept-Oct 1992, 4.

rally, union steward Bill Wheat was fired for allegedly leaving the factory without authorization, prompting a "mass grievance" meeting the next day in East Peoria of between 200 workers and company foremen over Wheat's firing, and solidarity rallies the next two weeks in Memphis and East Peoria. Cat re-hired Wheat September 14, prompting another large workplace rally.[42]

These confrontations between the UAW rank-and-file and Caterpillar management grew more frequent and intense in the year after the first strike ended, with management suspending or firing workers for attending rallies, filing grievances, wearing various T-shirts, caps, and buttons, and participating in in-plant job actions. In Aurora, workers wore buttons reaffirming their identity as pro-union and, implicitly, anti-line crossers by wearing "Member In Good Standing" buttons. On March 17, 1993, after management circulated a memo prohibiting employees from wearing these, at least fifty workers were suspended for refusing to remove the buttons in what Local 145 dubbed the "St. Patrick's Day Massacre." The company rescinded the policy and reinstated all those suspended with back pay. On April 28, Caterpillar indefinitely suspended over 140 workers from its Mapleton foundry for wearing "PERMANENTLY REPLACE FITES" T-shirts, more than half of them from the day shift. According to the UAW, this left several departments without workers and threatened the foundry's ability to operate. The next day, Caterpillar relented, with Fites issuing a company-wide letter "asking our management team to no longer take action against employees who wear clothing or buttons that attack me in my role as chairman and CEO." This culminated three weeks in which UAW members, sympathizers, and staff including union vice-president Bill Casstevens were arrested while wearing these anti-

[42] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 1, No. 4, Sept-Oct 1992, 4-5.

Fites T-shirts during protests at Cat plants in East Peoria, Pontiac, Mossville, Mapleton, Morton, Decatur, and York.[43]

Within the factories, union officials and shop-floor representatives found themselves the targets of company harassment, spurring further workplace protests and, by late 1993 and early 1994, a series of short wildcat and unfair-labor-practice strikes across the Caterpillar chain. After Cat suspended Local 2096 vice-president John Hammill and committeeman Dave Spratt for failing to return to work, even though they maintained they had not finished investigating a grievance, hundreds of workers in Pontiac and Aurora conducted a one-day unfair-labor-practice strike September 9 to protest both the outstanding NLRB charges and the suspensions. They returned only after Hammill was allowed to return to work the next day. Warehouse workers in Denver similarly struck Cat for a day on October 22 after the company indefinitely suspended Joe Vasquez, Local 1415's president, for wearing a union button that read, "Happiness is waking up in the morning and finding a Don Fites picture on a milk carton." When they returned to work the following day, Cat refused to allow them to work unless they forfeited the right to such activities. When the union and workers rejected this, the company relented and allowed them back to work.[44]

Local 974 executive board member George Boze, Jr., who had recently testified before the National Labor Relations Board, was indefinitely suspended and later fired for a heated exchange with a foreman, who claimed that Boze had verbally threatened him, and jabbed him in the chest with his fingers. This prompted the UAW to file charges with the NLRB, which upheld the union's side and ruled that the company's actions were "unlawfully motivated by Boze's

[43] Phil McCall, "'We Had to Stick Together:' Individual Preferences, Collective Struggle, and the Formation of Social Consciousness," *Science & Society*, Vol. 72, No. 2, April 2008, 165; *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 2, No. 4, May 1993, 1-2; Bob Bouyea, "50 Wearing Pro-Union Buttons Briefly Suspended," *Peoria Journal-Star*, March 18, 1993, B6. While the *Journal-Star* said 50 were suspended, *Contract Action Times* claimed 75 had been.
[44] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 2, No. 7, 1-2; Volume 2, No. 8, 1-2; Franklin, *Three Strikes*, 30.

union activity and his assistance and participation as a witness during the current NLRB trial against Caterpillar," and that there was "plenty of evidence to indicate the firing was fabricated by the foreman who was involved in the incident." According to Glenn Zipp, the Peoria NLRB director, Caterpillar's actions against Boze threatened to "have a chilling effect on employee's willingness to participate in the NLRB trial." As in Pontiac, Aurora, and Denver, it precipitated a series of protest strikes in East Peoria over three days in mid-November. Rather than squelching workplace protest through repressive discipline, Caterpillar was in fact fanning its flames.[45]

These disciplinary measures and the subsequent solidarity actions emboldened workers in their confrontations with management. Cat's refusal to accept grievances over issuing verbal warnings to try to suppress chanting on the shop floor led 170 of 175 second-shift workers in Denver to walk off the job on March 7. On the anniversary of the so-called "St. Patrick's Day Massacre," the entire first shift in Aurora walked out in unison, marching and chanting pro-union slogans.[46] As the company attempted to assuage workers' resentment with meetings in East Peoria, workers in seventeen meetings frequently interrupted, questioned, and shouted down Cat vice-president James Despain.

In the face of consistent company pressure and the prevalent threat of discipline for shop floor activism, UAW local officers and rank-and-file activists consistently defied those threats with acts of solidarity. In particular, the use of unfair-labor-practice (ULP) strikes augmented the work-to-rule campaign by shutting down, not simply slowing production almost completely at factories for a day or longer. Reliant upon unresolved NLRB charges against a company, ULP strikes were a crucial tactic because, unlike so-called economic strikes over wages and benefits,

[45] McCall, "We Had to Stick Together," 166; *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 2, No. 9, December 1993, 1-2. Cat converted Boze's indefinite suspension into a termination on December 2; *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 3, No. 1, 2.
[46] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 3, No. 4, April-May 1994, 6, 9.

companies could not permanently replace workers on ULP strikes—as Cat threatened to do during the 163-day economic strike of 1991-1992. Thus, workers could and did stop work over certain company actions that the union considered additional violations of labor law and not lose their jobs.

Although ULP strikes were innovative and typically responses to what workers considered egregious company behavior, they were not necessarily spontaneous.[47] Indeed, while some instances of shop floor militancy were spontaneous acts, many actions, protests, and walkouts were in fact coordinated, with workers prepared to both act and know the consequences of doing so. Contract Action Teams were organized by departments in each factory, met frequently to discuss conditions and the climate in the plant, and planned accordingly. These Teams often met at work, circulating notice by word of mouth or hand-written notes. One such hand-written flier urged third-shift workers in East Peoria to meet before starting work in a cafeteria on February 3, 1994—amidst the proliferation of such strikes. This hand-written flier asked, "What is A ULP Strike" [Sic.] and revealed the role that Contract Action Teams played in disseminating information about and coordinating ULP strikes, with a Contract Action Team stamp at the bottom of the one-page sheet.[48]

Nationalist themes and patriotic imagery were prevalent in the union's in-plant and corporate campaigns. Workers' critiques of Caterpillar's drive for concessions and shop floor

[47] Phil McCall generally treats the 1993-1994 period of short strikes as "temporary walkouts and 'wildcat' strikes (spontaneous initiated by workers themselves)," "We Had to Stick Together," 165. McCall's article argues that in the face of serious and consistent threats from Cat, workers continued to demonstrate their solidarity, even at grave personal and economic peril. While this is true, what he does not consider is that such acts were also the result of *worker and union coordination and planning*, especially through Contract Action Teams that had been operating by this time for over one and one-half years. Moreover, by treating such acts of solidarity as strictly spontaneous, McCall essentializes acts of solidarity as worker-generated. This ignores how networks of solidarity were cultivated and reinforced not only through such examples of solidarity, but also through the union's role in planning, organizing, and persuading workers. Many were reluctant to walk out, fearing the loss of their jobs. Others knew little about what rights workers had under ULP strikes; Legel Interview.

[48] "What is A ULP Strike" flier, Caterpillar Strike 1991-6, Box 13, Folder 11,, ILIR UIA.

disciplinary actions, as well as photographs in UAW publications and local and national media covering the dispute, indicate that union members consistently knitted ideas of freedom, equality, and economic stability together with patriotic symbols. UAW members who wore pro-union, anti-Fites and anti-Caterpillar T-shirts, buttons and stickers also wore caps, buttons, pins, and patches on their clothing that prominently displayed the American flag. Workplace rallies and public demonstrations in all towns with Cat factories saw workers also parade with patriotic paraphernalia such as large American flags and red, white and blue banners. Picket signs fused protesting Caterpillar's actions with patriotism, containing slogans such as "Solidarity: A Way of Life" above intertwined red, white, and blue ribbons.[49]

Workers invoked patriotic imagery to reaffirm their American identity, and also their importance as American workers in an era when global production and competition in core industries such as steel, auto, electronics, and heavy machinery and particularly with Cat's rival Komatsu, hastened corporate America's quest for cheaper labor costs. Cat employees conveyed not only pride in their work but also the view that they, as skilled and semi-skilled manufacturers of heavy machinery which symbolized social and economic improvement, were vital to making these products and ensuring the company's reputation for excellent quality. During its work-to-rule strategy, the UAW sought to restrict Cat's productivity while also illustrating the necessity of their members to the company's success. Bill Casstevens argued that "This proves what we've been saying. This company cannot succeed without the active cooperation of skilled UAW workers." The UAW claimed that when they returned to work after the strike, employees spent considerable time correcting myriad assembly problems because managers working during the

[49] Photographs of workers and rallies throughout the two-plus years of *Contract Action Times* are rife with patriotic imagery. For some stark examples, see Volume 1, No. 1, June 1992, 1; Volume 1, No. 4, Sept-Oct. 1992, 1, 7; Volume 1, No. 5, November 1992, 5; Volume 2, No. 4, May 1993, 1; Volume 2, No. 6, July-August 1993, 3, 6; Volume 3, No. 3, March 1994, 6

strike did not know how to perform their jobs. "Remember," The union reminded workers, "[w]e know how to do it right. They don't."[50]

More frequently, though, union members employed patriotic symbols and discourse as essential elements to criticize Cat's demands for concessions and its punishment of activist workers. An advertisement the UAW ran in the Labor Day edition of *The New York Times*, showed a photograph of a worker erecting a barbed wire fence around a Cat factory with the question appearing below it in bold letters, "What COUNTRY is this anyway?" The text of the advertisement, touting "the achievements of labor unions: The eight-hour day, decent wages, fair working conditions," stood in contrast to the photo, whose stark imagery conveyed repression and an environment akin to prison. It characterized Caterpillar's "non-negotiable demands" of "poverty-level, two-tier wages for new hires and twelve-hour workdays for current employees," as well as surrounding "its plants with barbed wire," and having "illegally suspended or fired" employees as acting with "an iron fist." Combined with the pointed question, in disproportionately large print, these accusations cast Caterpillar not only as a corporate villain but also contemptuous of labor's accomplishments in America. This ad implied that Cat's actions were foreign, dictatorial, not an 'American' way of handling the dispute. In contrast, by touting its desire for "collective bargaining, based on mutual respect" as both a real solution to the dispute and the way to secure labor's achievements—the "eight-hour day, decent wages, and fair working conditions"—the UAW was framing itself as the defender of standards for working Americans, of what it considered the significance of Labor Day.[51]

In its own publications, the union directly construed Cat's actions in unpatriotic terms. When July Fourth fell on a weekend in 1992 and Caterpillar refused to grant workers a long

[50] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 1, No. 4, Sept-Oct. 1992, 1; Volume 1, No. 2, July 1992, 8.
[51] "What COUNTRY is this anyway?" *New York Times*, September 5, 1993, E11.

weekend, as had been the case in previous contracts, the UAW response was vehement.[52] Accusing the company of having "turned its back on American values" under the heading "Caterpillar—An UnAmerican Company," the UAW admonished the company to "reflect on the Revolution which founded this country." The "army of an autocratic king was beaten by common men and women who believed they had a right to freedom, democracy, and the pursuit of happiness. More than 200 years later, Caterpillar executives are trying to deny us those same rights." Thus, they considered the loss of a paid holiday to celebrate the anniversary of America's independence as nothing less than an affront to their American heritage and identity.[53]

While the UAW increased its pressure on Cat from inside the factory walls and local Illinois communities and utilized nationalist discourses to denounce the company, it also considered forming alliances with international unions representing other Cat workers. Such overtures had largely lain dormant since the late 1970s as a result of America's deep recession and the UAW's lurch toward protectionism especially in the 1980s, the UAW sought to pressure Caterpillar internationally by connecting the struggles of Cat workers in America with others around the world. In April 1992, as the UAW was faced with the threat of permanent replacements in America, workers in South Africa and Belgium conducted brief sympathy strikes to express their common concern with their American counterparts over issues such as outsourcing and job security. Over a year into its in-plant and corporate campaign, the UAW sent vice-president Bill Casstevens and a small group to Europe to rally with French and Belgian workers, and to speak before the International Metalworkers Federation (IMF) to mobilize support for Cat workers in the US. Declaring himself impressed with the show of international solidarity from French workers, who wore red anti-Fites T-shirts demanding "Remplacons Fites

[52] Central Agreement between Caterpillar Inc. and the UAW, October 21, 1988, article 7.8, 40, UIA.
[53] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 1, No. 2, July 1992, 7.

Une Fois Pour Toute!" ("Replace Fites Once and For All!"), Casstevens stated, "Solidarity with Cat workers overseas is an important part of our campaign. We have common problems, and we're going to pursue common solutions."[54]

For the next year, the stated goal of international solidarity presented particular possibilities for the UAW's corporate campaign. By 1966, Cat had established its manufacturing sites not as self-sufficient facilities but rather as units dedicated to particular component work such as foundry forging, parts manufacturing and distribution, hydraulics, and finishing assembly. As a result, Caterpillar ensured that no "single plant anywhere, including the United States, makes the complete line of Caterpillar products." Given the company's vast international, integrated production and distribution systems, the UAW and worldwide unions at Cat could have threatened to interrupt Cat's global production and sales.[55] The situation also offered the possibility of unifying workers across national boundaries based upon the similar work they performed and the similar tactics Cat used against them to relocate work around the world to skirt labor strife, and to acquire leverage when bargaining. In theory, the UAW's overture toward international unionism could have forced the company to reckon with workers and a union not in one nation, but rather movements around the world that could disrupt the company's production and sales worldwide.

In practice, however, this was much more difficult to achieve. On May 5 and 6, 1994, the UAW hosted what it billed as the first ever World Council of Caterpillar Workers through the Metalworkers Federation in Peoria. Cat unionists from around the world met to discuss "global solidarity, the strongest weapon workers have against a greedy global company like Cat,"

[54] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 1, No. 4, Sept-Oct. 1992, 3; Volume 2, No. 6, July-August 1993, 3.
[55] Company and Market Reports (Preparatory Document), UAW International Affairs Department, Herman Rebhan Collection, Box #14, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University—hereafter UAW IAD HR ALUA-WSU.

according to the UAW's *Contract Action Times*. The Metalworkers' Federation pledged to "cease its anti-union activities and return to a policy of consultation," and "return to the bargaining table with the UAW and negotiate in good faith." To this end, Metalworkers' Federation general secretary Marcelo Mallentacchi declared, "We'll do whatever the UAW wants us to do." To convey to its members the importance and potential of international solidarity, the UAW published several articles in its June 1994 *Contract Action Times* that discussed the similar difficulties that Cat workers in South Africa, Belgium, France, Italy, Russia, and Japan faced.[56]

Yet the UAW's commitment to international solidarity was ephemeral and, in all likelihood, a tactical maneuver to pressure Cat rather than indicative of a philosophical shift within the union. In particular, it reflected a measure of disconnected awareness between the International leadership and the rank-and-file on labor internationalism. While the UAW's statement that the May 1994 convention of the World Council of Caterpillar Workers was accurate, it also ignored that through the Metalworkers Federation, the UAW had long met with other unionists within IMF World Agricultural Implement Industry Conference, beginning in 1967 through the 1980s. It was not as though the UAW and, to a degree, its participating locals during this period were completely unaware of what Cat workers around the world experienced. Nor were the statements of Casstevens and Mallentacchi the first calls for international union solidarity between the UAW and its global counterparts. Pat Greathouse, UAW vice-president for Agricultural Implements and one of the stronger advocates for fostering international union ties within the UAW, had pledged at the 1972 World Conference to invite union representatives from some of Caterpillar's global factories to attend UAW negotiations with Caterpillar in

[56] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 3, No. 5, June 1995, 8-11.

Peoria. Several did attend on July 10, 1973.[57] Later Metalworkers Federation Ag-Imp conferences, such as the one in Chicago in May 1975, expressly sought to "gather workers concerned with three, massive…multinationals so as to establish a concrete and viable solidarity network, one that we may call upon for help in case of need."[58]

However, the intervening years saw the UAW shift its focus from international unionism to primarily trade protectionism as it attempted to address the declining competitive position of American auto companies vis-à-vis their Japanese and German counterparts, to cope with factory closings, and the relocation of work to non-union areas within the US and to foreign nations. As with Japanese auto and agricultural implement unions, the UAW also embraced collaboration with American companies through joint labor-management programs to make these businesses more profitable and competitive with foreign global companies in an unsuccessful attempt to stanch its eroding membership.[59] Thus, at the time of intensified business competition resulting in job and membership losses, the UAW and some other world unionists refrained from fostering closer ties with each other, and coordinating bargaining and strike activity against multinational firms.

Even when the UAW had urged closer ties with global workers in the 1960s and 1970s, it did not publicize these efforts to its members. *UAW Local 974 News*, the Peoria-based semimonthly newsletter for 974's membership, failed to publish articles informing members of working conditions and issues at CAT's overseas plants, or indicating actions or proposals on behalf of their international counterparts. As the previous chapter discussed, in the 1980s, at the

[57] Letter from Burton Bendiner, IMF World Auto Councils Coordinator, to Herman Rebhan, UAW International Affairs Department, May 30th, 1973; Letter from Herman Rebhan to Pat Greathouse, June 4th, 1975; Letter from Pat Greathouse to Bernard Mourgues, no date, UAW IAD HR Box 15, File #33, UAW Caterpillar 1973-74, ALUA-WSU.
[58] Letter from Collin Gonze to Pat Greathouse, May 19, 1975 re: Ag-Imp Follow-Up, UAW IAD, HR, Box 5, File #1, US-IMF-JC Metalworkers Conference, May 3, 4, 1976, ALUA-WSU.
[59] See chapter three.

height of intense competition between American and Japanese corporations, most of the articles and letters to the editor published in the International's paper *Solidarity* and, locally, *Local 974 News* did not reflect or urge international unionism but rather nationalism and, in some extreme examples, nativism.[60] Although the UAW devoted significant space to Cat's international workers and the World Council of Caterpillar Workers in the June 1994 edition of *Contract Action Times*, the next month's paper was dominated by the union's unfair-labor-practice strike that started June 20, and after August 1994 contained no articles about or quotes from their foreign co-workers.[61] Even had it seriously pursued close-knit alliances with Cat workers worldwide—and the lack of evidence indicates it did not—the union would have been forced to reconcile the class-conscious but primarily nationalist sentiments and local orientation of its rank-and-file with broader parameters of class and class conflict than the UAW and its members had previously engaged.

Although the UAW faced conditions at Caterpillar that Jerry Tucker's expertise in generating rank-and-file solidarity may have counted, it instead struck and lost in what New Directions termed "The Private Sector's 'PATCO,'" adopting work-to-rule tactics only after losing the strike.[62] Even as their in-plant and corporate campaigns gained strength and pressured Cat, the UAW and Cat workers still did not work with Tucker, the UAW's most knowledgeable and experienced staff member on in-plant campaigns. Instead, Tucker worked with Allied

---

[60] See Evelyn and Marshall Morgan, "Broken promises," *UAW Solidarity*, Vol., 30, No. 6, August 1987, 20; Niles F. Bell, "send Aloha Liberty Foundation to Japan" and "Send Them Packing," *UAW Solidarity*, Vol. 29, No. 6 and No. 9, July-August, 20, and November 1986, 21; Jim Copley, "No Yuppie, He," *UAW Solidarity*, Vol. 29, No. 8, October 1-15, 1986, 20-21. Bill Martin and Jim Bishop, "A Letter to Congressman Michel," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 33, No. 12, October 25, 1985, 3. In Local 974, see Tony Green, "President' Report," Vol. 35, No. 1, January 23, 1987, 3; Jim Bolliger, "Letter to the Editor," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 35, No. 11, November 20, 1987, 5; "Japanese Buy American hearts and minds," *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 37, No. 8, August 19, 1988, 6. For more on the resurgence of nativist sentiment connected to the "Buy American" movement, see Dana Frank, *Buy American: The Untold Story of Economic Nationalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), 160-186.

[61] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 3, No. 6, July 1994.

[62] "CATERPILLAR: The Private Sector's 'PATCO?'" *The Voice of New Directions*, Vol. 4, No. 1, April 1992, 1, 8, Jerry Tucker Personal Papers, copy in author's possession.

Industrial Workers (AIW) Local 837 in nearby Decatur against Staley/Tate and Lyle in the 1990s.[63] He was openly critical of the UAW's embrace of ESP, and its failure to respond to Cat's contention that global competition justified its concessionary demands, arguing, "From the beginning, the union should have begun to answer (company) claims (of its need to be globally competitive) with valid worker and community consideration." Tucker had the backing of Local 751 president Larry Solomon at Cat's Decatur plant, who echoed his view of ESP. "He's always been against this jointness, which has had a devastating effect at our plant," Solomon said. "I think his philosophy has been right all along. Our interests are not the same as Caterpillar's." However, Tucker had little support within 974. When Tucker ran for UAW's presidency in 1992, Jerry Brown claimed that "Ninety-nine percent support the (Owen Bieber) administration," and reportedly asked Tucker in a letter not to send along any campaign information to the local.[64]

It also meant not working with Ray Rogers, an independent consultant whom AIW Local 837 in Decatur hired in their struggle with corn processor Staley/Tate and Lyle. With a background in the grassroots Miners for Democracy movement that elected Arnold Miller to the presidency of the United Mine Workers, Rogers honed corporate campaign strategies when he led a successful effort to get a union contract with North Carolina textile company J.P. Stevens in the 1970s, and in the failed strikes of packinghouse workers at Hormel in Austin, Minnesota in 1985-86, and paper workers at International Paper in Jay, Maine in 1988. During the campaign against Tate and Lyle, Rogers and Local 837 targeted major businesses doing business with the company, focusing especially on State Farm Insurance and Miller Brewing Company. While targeting State Farm yielded few results, the Miller campaign under Tucker's direction successfully convinced the nation's second-largest brewer to not buy from Tate and Lyle. While

[63] Tucker Interview; Franklin, *Three Strikes*, 110-113.
[64] Patt Johnson, "New Directions Versus Old Ways," *Peoria Journal-Star*, June 16, 1992, B1.

Rogers had erred in choosing State Farm as a primary target for the AIW corporate campaign, his expertise and experience in probing the channels of corporate power may have served Cat workers well. Like Tucker, however, Rogers' criticism of organized labor and his willingness to work outside the traditional corridors of power of the AFL-CIO made him a *persona non grata* with most unions, including the intensely territorial UAW.[65]

Crucially, the UAW also lacked political support, at both the state and federal level to protect workers during strikes and lockouts. During the early 1990s, Democratic legislators in Illinois passed a striker replacement bill that would have barred the state from any doing business with firms that permanently replaced workers during a labor dispute, including granting that business tax exemptions or credits, or making contracts with the company. Yet the bill lacked sufficient support to override the veto of Republican Governor Jim Edgar the first time it was passed, and on the second attempt it met defeat in the state Senate after clearing the House.[66] Similar legislation failed on a federal level in 1993 despite Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress and a Democratic president, with a Republican filibuster defeating a bill to ban the permanent replacement of strikers.[67] This was but the latest in a long line of political defeats the UAW and American unions has suffered, forestalling even modest reforms in labor law in the 1970s, and minimal protections for workers from plant closings in the 1980s.[68] The UAW limited its allies in the labor movement who could have assisted in its shop floor and community

---

[65] Steven K. Ashby and C.J. Hawking, *Staley: The Fight for a New American Labor Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 37-38, 112-113, 117, 120-123 224; Peter Rachleff, *Hard-Pressed in the Heartland: The Hormel Strike and the Future of the Labor Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 1993), 55-57, 62, 64, 67; William Serrin, "Organized Labor Is Increasingly Less So," *New York Times* November 18, 1984, E3; William Serrin, "Trying for a Comeback As a Union Hero," *New York Times*, October 6, 1985, F6.

[66] Toby Eckert, "Veto Session a Sign of Things to Come," *Peoria Journal-Star*, November 9, 1991, A11; Bill O'Connell, "Pro-Striker Bill Falls One Vote Short in Senate," *Peoria Journal-Star*, June 26, 1992, A6.

[67] Anne Hazard, "Replacement Ban Near Defeat," *Peoria Journal-Star*, July 15, 1993, A6.

[68] Gary M. Fink, "Labor Law Revision and the End of the Postwar Labor Accord," in Kevin Boyle ed., *Organized Labor and American Politics, 1894-1994: The Liberal-Labor Alliance* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 239-257; "Was Plant-Closing Bill Really Dangerous?" *UAW Local 974 News*, Vol. 33, No. 13, January 24, 1986, 12.

struggles at Cat at the same time that its capacity to advance an effective political agenda, at the state and local level, had considerably waned.

"Peoria Is Still a Company Town:" Corporate Campaigns and the Community

Paralleling its in-plant strategy, the UAW attempted to damage Caterpillar's business as well as its reputation with a corporate campaign. Expanding the dispute's battle lines from the factories to local communities and across the nation, the UAW targeted industry shows and the company's extensive network of dealers, and spoke and protested at Cat's annual meetings. The union also utilized innovative protest tactics such as street theater, cultivated vibrant solidarity networks within the union, and brought its pickets from the shop floor to the community. Despite these extensive efforts, the union's tactics within the community met with limited success. The intensity of the conflict and some UAW tactics alienated observers in factory towns, inviting criticism from local papers that revealed the deep fissures between the union, the company, and many Peorians. Crucially, the dispute in an area hard hit by deindustrialization laid bare the chasm between many Peorians on one side, and the UAW, its members and their families on the other, over what benefits workers and the town should expect from the multinational corporation Caterpillar—by far the area's largest employer.

As with its in-plant tactics, the UAW devoted considerable time and energy to publicly attacking Cat CEO Don Fites and other company executives. Branding Fites and Cat executives "union busters," the union attempted to pressure Cat to back down from its demands for union concessions. Cat's corporate office building in downtown Peoria became a site for large rallies as well as periodic picketing, at which union officials and rank-and-file members boisterously denounced the company's rigid positions at the bargaining table, and its disciplining of workers during the work-to-rule campaign. With well over 1,000 members in attendance at one rally,

Local 974 recognized and congratulated workers for acts of solidarity supporting suspended workers. It then conducted a mock trial of Fites and Cat's lead negotiator Jerry Brust outside Cat's office building for failing to bargain in good faith. With the crowd chanting, "Guilty, guilty," the "jury" hanged a likeness of Fites in effigy, laid a coffin containing Cat' final offer to rest, and urged the company to return to bargaining. The size of the rally briefly closed Northeast Adams Street, a main downtown thoroughfare where Cat's office is located. After the rally, a parade of cars drove slowly through the subdivision where Fites and his family lived, honking their horns and prompting calls to the police to disperse them.[69]

Illinois Cat workers linked with members in the West to picket and distribute leaflets at MinExpo, a major industry show, in October 1992 in Las Vegas. With the support of locals from California, Nevada, and Arizona as well as other union members from Las Vegas, UAW Contract Action Teams assembled about 500 union activists for four days, accusing the company of union busting in its factories, and selling defective equipment made by managers while the UAW was on strike. Some protests resulted in heated clashes with police, who arrested thirty demonstrators outside the Las Vegas Convention Center.[70] It also drew upon the union's historic strength in Detroit to turn out activists in February for demonstrations at the Design and Construction Expo '93. With many wearing anti-Fites T-shirts, UAW members circulated fliers calling into question Cat's ability to meet deadlines and customers' product demands. Although Cat did not send a delegation to the 1993 ConExpo, the UAW did, speaking with and distributing literature to heavy machinery dealers and customers attacking Cat's labor practices as "destroy[ing] employee morale," according to 974 member Spike McFall.[71]

---

[69] Marnie Mead Oberle, "UAW Hangs Fites in Effigy," *Peoria Journal-Star*, September 21, 1992, A1.
[70] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 1, No. 5, November 1992, 1-2.
[71] Bob Bouyea, "Trade Show is Site of Anti-Cat Protest," *Peoria Journal-Star*, February 4, 1993, B3; *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 2, No. 2, March 1993, 3; Volume 2, No. 3, April 1993, 1-2; Dayna R. Brown,

As stockholders in Cat, the UAW attended and protested in company shareholders meetings. Accusing Fites of mismanaging the company by closing factories, failing to complete planned production sites in the Peoria area, and cost overruns from its Plant With a Future (PWAF) factory upgrades, the UAW attempted to drive a wedge between Cat's stock holders and chief executives. Fliers asking "CAN SHAREHOLDERS AFFORD MANY MORE OF FITE'S [Sic.] FIASCOS?" identified themselves as "Concerned Cat Employees" as well as "Members UAW Locals," reflecting their efforts to appeal to non-union audiences such as shareholders.[72]

While they branched out in the corporate campaign, workers also expanded their solidarity networks within the union and their community in new and innovative ways. Returning from the first strike to "start [his] job with the union," Mike Legel became a union steward on the job and an amateur television producer. Starting with recording picket line activities with his wife during the 1991-1992 strike, Legel continued his interest in video by making, producing, and airing a show about workers' experiences and the UAW's side of the dispute. "The Mountain Climber" aired weekly on two Peoria-area public access channels. His work with "The Mountain Climber" led to his work with other UAW members publishing "The Unionite," a newsletter of union activists that discussed issues and events at Caterpillar while connecting them with other union struggles at Staley, Bridgestone/Firestone, and later the fights at the *Detroit News* and *Free Press*.[73] Though begun through his own initiative, Legel's media work became advertised in the UAW's *Contract Action Times* and, later, he and others regularly

---

"UAW Stresses Cat Dispute at Construction Convention," *Peoria Journal-Star*, 3/22/93, B1 . The UAW pegged the number of protesters in Detroit at 300, while the *Journal-Star* put the number at 125

[72] "WANTED FOR QUESTIONING" flier, no date, ILIR, Series 2—Automobile Workers, Box 13, Folder 11, UIA.

[73] Legel Interview. For fuller discussions of these contemporaneous disputes, see Ashby and Hawking, *Staley*; Franklin, *Three Strikes*, 109-116, 215-225.

spoke at UAW-organized meetings at its Reuther Family Education Center at Black Lake, Michigan.[74]

Spouses of Local 974 members worked with UAW staff to form Families in Solidarity in 1992 as "a positive alternative to Cat's attack on working people." Formed initially by six women, Families in Solidarity grew to over fifty people by the end of the year in the Peoria area, with groups also forming in other factory towns. The organization focused much of its work in support of union activities, joining rallies outside factories and at Cat's corporate offices. It coordinated efforts with Cat workers and their spouses across Illinois to rally before Caterpillar's stockholders meeting in April 1993, and held fundraisers to help support the families of fired workers.[75]

Yet Families in Solidarity also played crucial roles organizing social events within the union, working with community groups to help people in need, and also developed creative protest tactics in the workplace. The group held, dances, dinners, and what the UAW termed "Rallies Under the Sun" that began with morning marches and rallies to support workers, followed by breakfast then activities such as horseshoe and volleyball tournaments all day for workers' families. Motivated by their motto "Women on Fire," it also collected canned food and brought presents for children who were victims of abuse and the poor, and mobilized retirees to assist the needy and elderly in their communities. They also joined public tours at Caterpillar, entering the factories concealing "PERMANENTLY REPLACE FITES" T-shirts that they revealed as they discussed union concerns with the general public.

Families in Solidarity—comprised and run primarily by women—played a pivotal role within the male-dominated locals, and on its behalf in communities, during the dispute with

[74] Legel Interview.
[75] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 1, No. 6, December 1992, 8; Volume 2, No. 4, May 1993, 10; Families in Solidarity, "Fundraiser for Our Discharged Families," no date, Caterpillar Strike 1991-6, Box 13, Folder 11, UIA.

Caterpillar. Its representatives were integral members of various Contract Action Team committees covering recreation and worksites/picketing, but also joined union training sessions to plan ULP strikes. Women as spouses, and not as Cat employees, helped to further break down union meetings as primarily male-dominated spaces, with female representatives of the group speaking there about its activities.[76] Although women had long played support roles for strike activities, their diverse forms of activism within the union and local communities gave a more public face to UAW locals than before. Families in Solidarity did so in ways not directly connected with strikes, with community work creating an alternative public image for the UAW other than as the "strike-happy" or "greedy" organization that many Peorians considered it to be.

Yet these efforts only went so far in a rather conservative community that was devastated by deindustrialization and seeking to regain its economic footing and reshape its public image. Although the thousands of UAW members ensured and gained some support in and around Peoria, tough economic times and fatigue from industrial warfare wore down many observers, many of whom simply wished the conflict would end. Union and non-union workers alike weighed in to the ongoing public debate that transpired in papers such as the *Peoria Journal-Star* but, just as often, area residents and the paper's editorial board frequently framed the dispute as one between spoiled children who sullied Peoria's image. Crucially, Cat's statements and residents' opinions about the UAW painted the union as detached from local interests and even that of Local 974 itself. In these public exchanges, the union emerged the worse for wear.

According to many Peorians whose views appeared in the *Journal-Star*, the UAW complained too much about the terms and conditions at Caterpillar. After witnessing the UAW demonstrations at the MinExpo in Las Vegas, retired Cat employee J.E. Curfman upbraided the

[76] "Rally Under the Sun" flier, no date, Caterpillar Strike 1991-6, Box 13, Folder 11, UIA; *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 1, No. 6, December 1992, 8; Volume 2, No. 8, October-November 1993, 6; Volume 3, No. 4, April-May 1994, 8.

activists for having "misread how their demonstrations, shouting, and other demeaning acts would be viewed." Contrasting the higher wages of UAW workers with lower-paid employees in the "predominately service-related" Las Vegas economy, Curfman urged UAW members to "take a close look at what they have versus most of the labor groups both in Peoria and elsewhere."[77] Criticizing union leaders for "throwing a raging tantrum like a little kid who wants another ice cream cone (when he's already had three)," Cat worker and line-crosser Valentin Jugovic argued that UAW members "forgot what gratitude means" when they claimed "We made Cat what it is today." Jugovic disagreed, crediting the company for turning "unskilled people" into "qualified workers…If Cat hadn't come and helped us, we would still be detassling corn and drinking moonshine on those farms."[78]

Even-handed editorials in the *Journal-Star* reinforced the impression that the two sides were equally responsible for the dispute. Urging Cat and the UAW to "abandon the war drums," the *Journal-Star* editorial board criticized both for inflicting a "war between the giants" onto a "community…still waiting for honest discussions."[79] Although Peorians expressed their displeasure with company and union alike, the UAW tended to receive the more intense criticism.

Two incidents in particular put the union under intense community and media scrutiny. In December 1992, the UAW escalated its corporate campaign by posting billboards around Peoria. One read "Fighting for a Fair Contract, Fighting for Peoria's Future." The other, on the outskirts of town reading, "You Are Entering A War Zone," irked many Peorians, including

---

[77] J.E. Curfman editorial, "Bad Image: Peoria Didn't Play Well in Las Vegas," *Peoria Journal-Star,* November 4, 1992, A4.
[78] Valentin Jugovic editorial, "Decent Legacy: We Should Be Grateful to Caterpillar," *Peoria Journal-Star*, February 13, 1993, A4. The byline in the *Journal-Star* did not identify Jugovic as a worker who crossed his picket line.
[79] "Some Things Never Change," *Peoria Journal-Star*, February 13, 1993, A4.

small business people. Peoria Area Association of Realtors president Norma Horton expressed concern that it tarnished the city's image and would detract newcomers to the area. "If we run our city down with these hurtful terms, how can we expect anybody else to embrace it?" Horton asked. Local 974 publicity and education director Wayne Schmidt intoned that the good jobs Cat workers had were central to the economy. "We are in a war. We're fighting for our jobs," Schmidt countered. If we lose our jobs, the Realtors won't have any houses to sell or anybody to buy any houses." The billboards stayed up, to the chagrin of the Realtors Association.[80]

The *Journal-Star* opined that declaring Peoria a "war zone" would scare off businesses from moving to the area, making the city's economy even more reliant on Cat. "Caterpillar remains the driving force behind the local economy, as it has been for most of this century," the *Journal-Star* acknowledged. "Peoria is still a company town... Business and government leaders have tried to make central Illinois more economically diverse, and have been somewhat successful. They will be less so, if businesses shy away from central Illinois because they believe…that this is a war zone."[81] The paper, apparently, preferred that the union relegate its "war zone" to local factories and not carry the fight to the community, lest it suffer further.

Union opposition to the appointment of Cat vice-president James Despain as head of the Peoria-area Heart of Illinois fundraising drive, and its threat to boycott the drive, intensified media criticism. Despain said he was "terribly disappointed" about the possibility of a UAW boycott. "For someone to use this as a bargaining chip is disappointing," Despain said. "Deserving people in the area are being held hostage over something they have nothing to do with." The UAW raised $400,000 in 1992 that helped fund over 35 local services.[82] *The*

[80] Paul Gordon, "UAW Leaders Say Their 'War Zone' Billboards Stay," *Peoria Journal-Star*, February 26, 1993, C12.
[81] "Entering a War Zone," editorial, *Peoria Journal-Star*, February 25, 1993, A4.
[82] Bob Bouyea, "UAW May Urge United Way Boycott," *Peoria Journal-Star*, February 27, 1993, A1.

Journal-Star launched a scathing critique of the UAW, referring to it as "out of bounds" and appropriating the union's "War Zone" terminology and connecting it to the possible UAW boycott:

> It is not fair, not defensible and not in the interest of Local 974 members to hold sick kids, poor people and troubled families hostage to the union's contract battle. Haven't there been enough casualties already in this dispute? How many more can this community take? If we are in a war zone, as the union says, then can't both sides put a big red cross on the United Way tent and declare it to be in the business of humanitarian relief, free from attack?[83]

The union eventually backed down from the threat.

While the editorial accurately remarked that there had been no contract negotiations "for months" at that point, its "pox-on-both-houses" refrain treated both sides as more than equally responsible for the lack of a contract, but in fact as equally powerful parties. Although the UAW exercised considerable leverage on Cat, the union lacked the ability to shut down the company's many overseas factories. It was forced back to work under the federally sanctioned threat. Additionally, while workplace and community activism had forced the company to rescind many disciplinary acts, the act-and-respond nature of America's system of industrial jurisprudence automatically placed workers and unions on the defensive. They were forced to react to Cat's aggressive actions. The slow-moving legal machinery of the NLRB allowed the company to appeal legal decisions, buying the company additional time to discipline disaffected workers—all the while staving off the threat of meaningful legal or financial penalties.

By the 1990s, the union's own historic reliance on traditionally successful pressure tactics such as strikes had long-term consequences that reinforced the public impression that workers generally struck over economic issues. While this was often true, other non-economic issues were often crucial to workers, arguably never more so than in the early 1990s. Opinions

[83] "Update on the Labor War: Can't We Put a Red Cross on the United Way and Declare It Free From Attack?" *Peoria Journal-Star*, March 2, 1993, A4.

in newspapers spotlighting the outstanding financial issues between the two sides elided an essential element—that non-economic issues such as workplace rights, equality between current and future union members, dignity and respect, and the future of the union itself motivated workers and their families to confront Cat and put those jobs on the line.

For years, contractualism between the UAW and Cat worked well enough to settle many if not all workplace disputes, thus keeping them out of the public's purview. Legal decisions such as the *Steelworkers Trilogy* buttressed the NLRB and arbitrators as *the* arbiters for collective bargaining conflicts.[84] This confined the resolution of most workplace conflicts primarily to the workplace, preventing the public from seeing and fully recognizing the details and stakes—the complex history of workplace jurisprudence—that were involved. The result was a distancing of the workplace from the scrutiny of communities, relegating the workplace to a separate sphere, of sorts, from the rest of society.

Caterpillar's disciplinary actions at work not only threatened the union's representatives for using the NLRB legal apparatus, but also threatened to undo a long-standing practice between the company and for union settling disputes. For decades, Cat and the union had a contractual clause stating that the company would pay for the time that chairmen of the Grievance Committees spent on in-shift union business such as filing grievances and conducting meetings.[85] In late 1992, as the UAW countered Caterpillar's harsh meting out of industrial discipline with numerous NLRB charges, Cat unilaterally ended the practice of paying for UAW officials' time conducting union business at work, threatening to place a large financial burden

[84] *United Steelworkers of America v. American Manufacturing Co.* (1960), 363 U.S. 564; *United Steelworkers of America v. Warrior & Gulf* (1960), 363 U.S. 574; *United Steelworkers of America v. Enterprise Wheel & Car Corp.* (1960), 363 U.S. 593.

[85] Contracts between Caterpillar and the UAW stipulated that Caterpillar would treat the chairmen of the grievance committees as if they were on a "leave of absence and will be paid by the Company for his regular shift hours during the regular work week…" See Central Agreement between Caterpillar tractor Co. and the UAW, December 15, 1979, Section 4.6, Full-Time Union Representatives, 20-22, ILIR, Series 2 Automobile Workers, Box 15, File 6, UIA.

on the union that the company used to shoulder. Cat justified this action by saying that it was under no obligation to continue this practice since no contractual agreement existed between the company and the UAW—which was true.

However, the NLRB ruled that the company could not unilaterally alter the provisions of the expired contract since neither side had negotiated over it during the failed contract negotiations before the first strike.[86] Caterpillar contested this and, until the issue was resolved with the 1998 labor agreement, refused in the meantime to pay committeemen to attend second and third-step meetings to settle grievances. In essence, the company countered UAW's strategies of using factories as sites for protest, and the NLRB for legal redress, by disciplining workers' acts of protest, using the appeals process within the NLRB to delay legal settlements and escalate the financial costs of legal and contractual remedies for the UAW and its locals as the union was still trying to recuperate the steep costs of the 163-day strike. Even as the NLRB charges piled up against Cat—the UAW had filed fifty-eight by January 1994 and a record 441 by the 1998 contract, making it the most heavily accused violator of labor law in the post-Wagner Act era—the company had to that point blunted the UAW's legal strategy by itself using the legal process to thwart potential union victories. This threatened nothing short of effective dispute resolution in the workplace itself, a cornerstone of contracutalism on which the UAW so heavily relied.[87]

Returning to Defeat: The UAW Strikes Again

Having gathered momentum and confidence during its in-plant and community campaigns, the UAW resumed its strike on June 20, 1994.[88] Believing that its in-plant campaign had sufficiently dried up Cat's inventory, the union felt that it could prevent the company from

[86] *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 2, No. 1, Jan-Feb. 1993, 3.
[87] McCall, "We Had to Stick Together," 165.
[88] Bob Bouyea, "UAW Striking, Cat Hiring," *Peoria Journal-Star*, June 22, 1994, A1.

meeting consumer demand that now was robust. Unlike the first strike, however, the second strike was an unfair labor-practice strike. This meant that, unlike strikes over primarily economic issues, the company could not permanently replace strikers, affording them some protection that they lacked in 1991.

Much of the impetus to strike came from the workers themselves. "They wanted to strike. They were itching to go out again," Jerry Brown recalled.[89] For many workers, tolerating harassment from managers as they worked to rule was difficult to bear. Masculinity framed resistance both on the shop floor and during strikes, and many in the union were impatient with its slowdown strategy. Striking was not simply a long-standing tactic, but one that expressed a strong stand, at times accompanied by intimidation and violence.

Union machinist Jack Emmons represented the importance of displaying toughness by striking in a news editorial, warning Cat of a future strike even as the work-to-rule campaign widened. Responding to the claim by Cat executive Wayne Zimmerman that workers "didn't have the stomach to strike again," Emmons retorted, "[D]on't let inactivity be mistaken for cowardice….When the time comes, the membership will swarm out of those buildings like angry bees. They will stand together as a union, like men with dignity."[90]

This was a losing strategy, for Cat had already amply illustrated its willingness to break the strike by hiring workers and encouraging union members to cross their picket lines. The first day of the second strike saw a wave of workers cross the picket line, with Cat claiming that roughly 1,200 of the 4,500 first-shift employees in Peoria-area factories reporting to work. Although the union disputed those numbers, it was undeniable that, despite a strong show of union strength, the company had more than enough people on hand to continue operations during

[89] Brown Interview.
[90] Jack Emmons, "UAW Won't Be Bullied," editorial, *Peoria Journal-Star*, November 14, 1992, A6.

the strike.[91] Company memos from the East Peoria factory indicate that Cat had an average of just over 1,000 workers there from October to December 1994.[92] Workers crossed despite the fact that the UAW tripled the funds that strikers would receive, from $100 to $300 per week, and was paying nearly $600 per month for workers' health insurance.[93] This illustrated more than people's fear of losing their jobs, but that unionism, solidarity, and the UAW itself did not invigorate many at Cat any more.

This amplified frustration among strikers, who endured the longest strike against an earthmoving equipment company—eighteen months—that any union had ever conducted. While much of the membership continued to foster ties within the Peoria area and others reached out to regional and national unions for support, an atmosphere of hostility and violence permeated the picket lines and local communities. Racial tensions flared among some white strikers and blacks who crossed the picket line, were hired during the strike, had already worked in non-union jobs, or who worked for Vance. Jimmy Williams, a security guard at the East Peoria factory, said that some strikers hurled racist epithets at line crossers and Vance guards.[94] Black Peorians historically denied opportunities at Cat now had a better chance at good jobs and better pay. This led one anonymous black line crosser who was black to urge other blacks to apply. "Black people need to make sure we're getting some of those jobs," he told *The Journal-Star*, "and if the people on strike lose their jobs, there's going to be a lot more job openings."[95] For some white strikers, this likely augmented their fear of not simply losing their jobs, but losing their status as white workers.

---

[91] Bouyea, "UAW Striking, Cat Hiring," A1.
[92] Manpower Update memorandum, East Peoria, 12/14/94, ILIR, Series 2 Automobile Workers, Box 13, UIA.
[93] Franklin, *Three Strikes*, 226.
[94] "Racial Slurs," editorial, *Peoria Journal-Star*, September 14, 1994, A4.
[95] Pam Adams, "Family First: Confessions of a Line Crosser," editorial, *Peoria Journal-Star*, August 3, 1994, A8.

Conclusion

The UAW made a fatal mistake when it struck Cat for the second time in June 1994, for despite staying out and pressuring Cat for eighteen months, the union was forced to relent and return to work in December 1995, still without a contract after more than four years negotiations had begun. While the fight with Cat was not yet over, the chances for victory were precariously thin. Cat held considerable leverage over the union and workers, who were divided among themselves and faced concerted community pressure throughout the dispute. A strong resurgence of class consciousness, infused with discourses of workplace rights and nationalism, failed to appeal to many in Peoria, where localism and loyalty to Cat remained strong.

The globalization of work and market competition had devastating effects on Cat workers by heightening company efforts to eliminate jobs, roll back union gains, and reassert an individualized relationship between employees. The company sought a return to conditions that had not existed since workers unionized in the early 1940s. Globalization also spiked tensions within local communities, fearful of the consequences should the area lose more jobs, especially the good-paying ones at Cat. Those who urged the two sides to settle the dispute regardless of the terms, or who crossed picket lines, did not embrace globalization as an avenue to success. Rather, they often expressed an acceptance of the pressures globalization placed on their lives, and a willingness to endure them as long as possible. Peoria, in turn, struggled to find viable long-term economic alternatives to the area's historic reliance on Cat for its livelihood, tackling deindustrialization with modest degrees of success that the next chapter will address.

Chapter 5: 'Not Gracious Victors:' Defeat, Deindustrialization, and the Declining Fortunes of the American Working Class, 1995-2005

As Sunday December 3, 1995 approached, Willie Coates had much on his mind. That day, he would cast his vote for or against a proposal for which Caterpillar had fiercely lobbied—in the press and in communications with the UAW and its members—to have its employees vote. With the strike having already lasted for seventeen months, and workers facing a second long winter on the picket lines, Caterpillar likely discerned that many, perhaps the majority, would ratify it and end over five years of bitter strife that divided the factory floor and the Peoria community. Ultimately, the union overwhelmingly rejected the proposal, but the International union called off the strike regardless of the final results. The International did not release the numbers, for the tally did not affect whether or not the membership would return. Local 751 in Decatur indicated that ninety-two percent of its members rejected the contract.[1]

In an interview with the *Peoria Journal*-Star, Coates revealed little beforehand about how he would vote, indicating the seriousness with which he weighed his decision. "I'm going to vote as though it is my vote that sends us back or my vote that keeps us out," he said quietly. His family weighed heavily on his mind. "A man has to do what a man has to do. My family comes first," Coates said, coughing as he became emotional.[2] However, his reflections on the strike, his career at Caterpillar, his union, and his experiences as a middle-aged African American father in Peoria, spoke volumes about the identities that shaped his perspectives and guided his choices. Coates fused his pro-union beliefs with his identity as a black male, speaking proudly as an example for younger black workers that a better life was possible, and the UAW was fighting for that. "The young brothers used to look up to me. I made it out of the ghetto, and I'm struggling

[1] Douglas Fruehling, "Strike Is Over But Fight Isn't," *Peoria Journal-Star*, December 4, 1995, A1.
[2] Clare Howard, "Striker Somberly Awaits Today's Vote," *Peoria Journal-Star*, December 3, 1995, A1.

here because I want good union jobs to remain so the younger generation can work its way out of the ghetto." His wife was also a union member and shop steward at the telephone company Ameritech. Coates made deep sacrifices to maintain his job at Caterpillar, well before the 1990s. He lost his car, motorcycle, and nearly his home when he was laid off in 1982. Even though the company called him back to work in 1987, he took a second job as a security guard at Northwoods Mall in 1991, before the strike. His son, age 21 also worked two jobs, the second "just pays for his car insurance." Sitting on his front porch, Coates reflected on the precariousness of his life, linking it to his union and the decline of America's industrial workers. ""We are Americans, and the flag symbolizes the union movement," Coates said with resolve. "At one time I thought I was on the top of the world. Now I'm just hanging on."[3]

In straightforward, poignant tones, Willie Coates articulated the uncertain terrain that strikers, indeed much of the American working class, had to negotiate as the twentieth century limped to a close. Layoffs, concessions, declining union power, and diminished prospects for the young threatened to undo the gains workers overall made after World War Two. African American workers such as Coates faced particular socioeconomic insecurities such as higher unemployment rates than their white counterparts. Having been historically excluded from many good jobs, black workers who did attain them faced early layoffs due to workplace seniority provisions. This chapter examines the culmination and consequences of the UAW struggles against Caterpillar, their impact on a dramatically altered labor-relations landscape locally and nationally, and the effects that deindustrialization had on the economy and people in the Peoria region, paying particular attention to its African American population. It takes a critical look at the union's fateful decision in June 1994 to shift from its reasonably successful in-plant

[3] Ibid.

campaign to resuming its strike, despite the company's unmistakable threat in April 1992 to permanently replace strikers, and discusses alternatives the union may have taken to have more forcefully opposed the company's concessionary demands.

Assessing the Strike and In-Plant Strategy: The Power of the Strike at Century's End

Some UAW leaders believed that, instead of returning to the picket lines in June 1994, they should have stuck with the in-plant campaign that had effectively hampered Caterpillar's production for two years, and goaded the company into an extensive harassment campaign that targeted local union leaders and rank-and-file militants on the shop floor. The in-plant strategies not only curtailed production, but also brought pressure from the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and a slew of negative newspapers stories concerning the company's widespread violations of labor law. In an effort to suppress the UAW's resistance to contract concessions and the work-to-rule campaign, Caterpillar responded by firing a total of 160 union members, suspending scores more, and routinely violating the union's right to organize and conduct union activity in the workplace, resulting in 441 labor-board charges against Caterpillar by the 1998 contract settlement—the most ever levied against a single company. Under extreme duress, workers were becoming adept at working to rule. Jim O'Connor, who was Local 974's president from 1981 to 1983, when he became a representative for the UAW International, was in charge of coordinating the in-plant campaigns. He believed they should have pursued this campaign, and not resumed the strike in 1994. "I really think that's where you win. You win on that shop-floor. You don't necessarily win out on the street where somebody's in there doing your job."[4] Jerry Brown agreed. "If I had to do it again," Brown reflected, "we should have stayed in the

[4] Jim O'Connor, interview at his home, Marquette Heights, Il, December 18, 2006.

plant instead of going on strike again and giving them [the company] the chance to replace us."[5] Some rank-and-file members disagreed, believing that striking was the right decision and would have been more effective were it not for those who crossed the picket line. "If it weren't for all the damn scabs going back in," insisted David LaHood, a retired 974 member and veteran of the 1990s battles, "there's no doubt in my mind we would have won [the strike]."[6]

LaHood is correct that the strikes would have been more effective without the mass defections within their own ranks, for those who worked during the strike had years of experience and vast knowledge of many jobs that they passed along to hundreds of new employees the company hired after 1994. Had the UAW maintained more solid picket lines, the union would have made it more difficult for Caterpillar to meet consumer demand. This would also have placed additional burdens on the company's supervisors and non-union staff, many of whom were reassigned to perform unfamiliar production jobs, to do these jobs while also training any new employees, further impeding production.

Yet LaHood and others who defended the union's long, unsuccessful strike in 1994 and 1995 overestimate the strength the UAW held against the company. By 1994, the UAW represented roughly one-quarter of Caterpillar's US workforce, with the rest dispersed among a growing number of non-union factories, especially in the South. Combined with its overseas factories, many of which produced similar products and spare parts—if not the same ones—the company did not lack the means to continue producing, and did shift some production to its factories in Brazil and Europe. However, the company did not need to shift the majority of its production during the 1994-1995 strike. By hiring hundreds of new employees, and enticing both

[5] Jerry Brown, interview at his home, Tremont, IL, April 3, 2007.
[6] David LaHood interview at the UAW local 974 union hall, East Peoria, Il, April 23, 2001.

current and retired UAW members to cross the picket lines, Caterpillar continued to produce enough engines, spare parts, and finished products to supply customers, while recording profits that surprised even business analysts.[7] Its profits for the 1995 fiscal year surpassed $1 billion for the first time. With the company thriving despite the long strike, the business press lavished praise on Caterpillar and its CEO, Don Fites, whom *Financial World* magazine named CEO of the year.[8]

The company's willingness to use replacement labor should have been abundantly clear after the first strike in 1992, which ended with Caterpillar's threat to permanently replace strikers. Although few workers in other factory towns returned to work, hundreds of Peoria UAW members, the site of the company's headquarters with a large potential pool of replacement workers, crossed their own picket lines to effectively break the strike. Nationwide, the UAW strikes against Caterpillar were part of a precious few large labor conflicts of the late twentieth century, with the number of strikes involving over 1,000 workers having drastically declined between the late 1960s and the early 1990s. The few unionized workforces at the remaining large firms were far less willing to take to the picket lines in this period than in years past, with the fear of permanent replacement looming overhead like the sword of Damocles. (See Table 5.1) Returning to the picket lines in June 1994 proved a fatal mistake. Why then did the UAW resort to the strike despite receiving such a painful lesson in its limitations just two years before?

Part of the answer lies, ironically, in the success of the in-plant strategy which slowed production enough to exhaust much of the machinery the company had stockpiled. The union,

[7] Bill Vogrin, "Opened Doors Reveal Smooth Operations," *Pekin Daily Times*, August 22, 1994, 1.
[8] Peter Elstrom, "This Cat Keeps on Purring," *Business Week*, January 20, 1997, 83-84; Gilbert C. Nolde, *All in a Day's Work: Seventy-Five Years of Caterpillar* (Hong Kong: Forbes Custom Publishing, 2000), 260.

therefore, thought that a strike would further limit production, deprive the company's dealers of equipment, and create a backlog of orders the company could not fulfill, thus forcing Caterpillar to relent. "We felt we had them over a barrel," Jerry Brown said, "and the pressure from the rank-and-file to go back out was growing" by 1994. "They were struggling to meet their orders, and we knew it." While the company disputed the degree to which the work-to-rule strategies had slowed production, these clearly had an effect, reducing output in the UAW-represented factories by roughly half the normal amount just a few months into the in-plant campaign.[9]

The union did not just overestimate the effectiveness of striking. In the heat of the shop floor battles that raged from 1992 to 1994, the UAW failed to adequately assess the effectiveness of working to rule in the context of the company's shift from mass production to lean production techniques. As chapter 4 discussed, lean production's very attractiveness to companies—reducing costs and production time through smaller stockpiles of parts and streamlined assembly lines with just-in-time methods—also exposed its soft underbelly, its susceptibility to disruption through work-to-rule campaigns that interfered with production by adding time, and therefore inefficiency, back into the process. This is just what the UAW effectively did by working to rule, adding considerable time where the company's industrial planners had not intended.[10]

More than the UAW's rejection of in-plant strategies was to blame for losing the struggles of the 1990s. The circumstances under which the UAW returned to the picket lines revealed crucial flaws in how its in-plant campaign functioned, and fundamental limitations in workers' willingness to stick with it. Working to rule is not a strategy implemented and executed overnight. It takes careful planning, ample time, and endless discussions and meetings to inform

[9] Brown interview; *UAW Contract Action Times*, Volume 1, No. 4, Sept-Oct. 1992, 1-2; John Lippert, "UAW Has Hope in Caterpillar Slowdown," *Detroit Free-Press*, September 5, 1992, 1A.
[10] See chapter 4 supra, 166-168.

and educate workers about how to work to rule, what their rights are, and how to avoid being disciplined by management. At Staley and LTV, Jerry Tucker met frequently with workers for months to coordinate in-plant efforts, and apprise workers of the potential costs involved.[11] In some ways, the UAW's successful application of work-to-rule strategies between the strikes is all the more impressive, for the union neither planned nor implemented them until the first strike failed. The UAW began working to rule within six weeks after the strike ended in early April 1992, and had already effectively stanched production within several months.[12]

But it initiated the in-plant phase of resistance amidst heavy repression that exacted a heavy toll on workers. Jim O'Connor criticized the UAW's belated approach to conducting work-to-rule, saying "I think we wait until we're in a protracted strike and then we're back to work without an agreement before we educate and train the members on how to do it. There's no pre-emptive training going on. We're not getting 'em ready a year or two before the contract expires, we're getting 'em ready in the middle of a battle."[13] Caterpillar heightened the costs of the strategy by inflicting losses on the locals through direct and frequently heated confrontations that resulted in widespread and illegal disciplinary actions. For example, foreman James Goddard in Decatur was found to have violated the rights of UAW 751 committeeman Rod Hale, who was talking to co-workers about union business while on break, which is protected union activity. Goddard confronted Hale both physically and verbally, approaching Hale and saying, "Hey buddy, I want to see you in the aisle," to which Hale answered, "I'm not your buddy." Goddard then grabbed Hale by the elbow, to which Hale responded angrily, "Keep your goddamned hands off me." Goddard then became irate and "broke into a hail of curse words" in

[11] Ashby and Hawking, *Staley*, 67-70; Jack Metzgar, "'Running the Plant Backwards' in UAW Region 5," *Labor Research Review*, Fall 1985, 35-43.
[12] David Moberg, "Year of the Cat," *In These Times*, December 25, 1995, 16.
[13] O'Connor interview.

front of his co-workers.[14] These were threatening, emotionally and psychologically stressful experiences to endure, and part of a corporate barrage with front-line supervisors playing central roles in heavy-handed harassment for which UAW members may not have been fully prepared. While the NLRB ruled that the company violated Hale's rights, it was part of a widespread pattern of company behavior intended to intimidate workers who stood up to management's aggressiveness. In the past, such heated confrontations were not uncommon and frequently were settled through the grievance procedure, with cooler heads prevailing. In the early 1990s, however, they were infused with the emotional context of a long and costly strike, and the pervasive threat of discipline that included losing one's job.

Working to rule required patience in the face of direct, often face-to-face pressure to match the perseverance workers had shown in resisting the company's demands for concessions. As Caterpillar's repression mounted, the urge to return to the strike, to revert a more direct form of action, grew stronger. A traditionally successful strategy before 1992, strikes against Caterpillar were aggressive, male-dominated actions in which maintaining a strong, unified, physical presence, backed by force if necessary, imposed the union's will over the company. Picket lines were spaces in which workers' masculinity was reinforced through bonding experiences—walking for hours together, talking, and verbally and physically harassing anyone trying to breach the line. Strikes represented a more effective form of resistance for a largely male workforce than working to rule, which relied on the delayed enforcement of the NLRB and the mechanisms of jurisprudence. A core component of working to rule as an alternative, protracted strategy is the willingness to adhere to it, to believe in the effectiveness of the *process* of slowing down production. Miners at Pittston in the late 1980s, also mostly male, bristled at

[14] Valerie Lilley, "Judge Says Cat Broke Labor Laws in Decatur Plant," *Peoria Journal-Star*, July 5, 1997, D10.

the provocations of management and armed guards, finding it difficult not to respond physically as they likely would have in past disputes. The UMWA radically altered course in opposing concessions in Pittston, utilizing sit-down protests and a combination of non-violent resistance and occupying company facilities that tested more than just the patience but the very masculine identities of the primarily male miners. Crucially, miners were trained in and convinced over time of the efficacy of the new strategies. Conversely, as time progressed at Caterpillar and tensions, and labor board charges mounted, the rank-and-file became more willing to walk out, for it represented a more direct form of fighting back.[15]

The rank-and-file at Caterpillar was pushed to a boiling point in the weeks before conducting its seventeen-month unfair labor practice strike, fueled by outrage over management harassment that left them feeling degraded. Al Weygand, UAW Local 145 bargaining committee chairman in Aurora, Illinois, characterized the mood of the membership as volatile. "The people are totally fed up. They are not going to allow Caterpillar to keep violating their rights," Weygand said. Workers showed their displeasure with signs reading, "Caterpillar treats us like dogs."[16] They felt dehumanized and unwilling to tolerate it, increasingly walking *off* the job in rolling strike actions.

While the union's work-to-rule campaign successfully slowed the company's production output, Caterpillar's aggressive attacks on workplace rights managed to frustrate workers and, to a considerable degree, put the UAW on the defensive. As NLRB charges mounted against it, the company used to its advantage the built-in delays through multiple appeals for realizing justice through the Labor Board. Its subsequent powerlessness to force companies such as Caterpillar

[15] Kim Moody, "Despite Fines, Pittston Strikers Resume Civil Disobedience," *Labor Notes*, September 1988, 15.
[16] Bob Bouyea, "1,900 UAW Members Walk Off Job in Aurora," *Peoria Journal-Star*, June 8, 1994, B1.

that openly flouted its directives at once called the effectiveness of the federal system of workplace jurisprudence into question, and inflicted greater harm on workers and the UAW than the company bore. While it incurred considerable legal costs, and sharp rebukes from the NLRB and its administrative law judges (ALJ), as the UAW compiled hundreds of unfair labor practice charges against it, Caterpillar's vast financial reserves as a profitable multibillion-dollar company allowed it to withstand the financial and public-relations blows. Illegally terminated and suspended workers, on the other hand, suffered far more as they risked losing their homes, their cars, their jobs in which they, as a high-seniority workforce, had invested years, and their families for their militancy.

The company's unilateral termination of the contractual clause requiring it to pay the union's committee chairpersons for on-shift union time was a potentially serious blow, for it challenged the union's financial capacity to fund union work that it had not been required to in the past. During the in-plant campaigns of the 1990s, the committee heads were vital to organizing shop-floor resistance to the company, in addition to performing representation duties. Forcing the UAW to pay for this work would have made such resistance more difficult by reducing the time the committee leaders spent on union business, and requiring more rank-and-file activists, many of whom lacked the experience in union work, to pick up the slack.[17]

Its campaign against the NLRB and the decisions it consistently rendered against Caterpillar was equally aggressive. Well beyond challenging the Board's judgments against it, the company attacked the integrity and objectivity of the NLRB's general counsel and claimed that the office was, "at best…out of touch with the realities of the factory floor and, at worst,"

[17] Central Agreement between Caterpillar Tractor Co. and the UAW, December 15, 1979, Section 4.6, Full-Time Union Representatives, 20-22, ILIR Library Union Vertical Files, 1912-2001, Series 2 Automobile Workers, Box 15, File 6, University of Illinois Archives—hereafter UIA.

guilty of "harbor[ing] a strong pro-union bias." In a scathing testimony before a House hearing on overseeing the NLRB in 1995, company human services vice president Wayne Zimmerman portrayed the company's disciplinary actions against union members during the in-plant campaign as nothing more than exercising what "we consider a basic right to manage our facilities." It was not the company that was intimidating the union and its members but rather, to Zimmerman, the other way around. The company had to take action against the UAW's in-plant activities because "Not only were these rallies disruptive to other workers, they were intimidating to plant guests and visitors, most of whom are customers or potential customers." Zimmerman criticized the counsel and the UAW alike, arguing that the "overall willingness on the part of the NLRB General Counsel's office in our current labor dispute to be a frequent advocate" protected what he dubbed "the most radical and irresponsible elements of the UAW." While claiming not to attack "the National Labor Relations Board as an institution…home to many highly-skilled and expert Administrative Law Judges, Board Members, and other professionals," Zimmerman and the company left little doubt concerning the regard it held for the Board's decisions against Caterpillar.[18] It continued to appeal all major Board rulings through 1997, as the NLRB decided in favor of the UAW in cases covering workers fired illegally, and the ruling that the 1994-1995 strike was an unfair-labor-practice strike. Even though the UAW won with these rulings, it ultimately failed to realize appreciable leverage in forcing Caterpillar to back off its demand for concessions. Delaying the resolution of the 441 NLRB charges served the company very well.

[18] Wayne Zimmerman testimony, *Subcommittee of Oversight and Investigations Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities, U.S. House of Representatives, 104th Congress, First Session* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), 103-114.

On a national level, the underwhelming response from the AFL-CIO in the Caterpillar strike, and the concurrent Staley lockout, paralleled the federation's apoplexy in the other great fights of the late twentieth century. After President Reagan permanently replaced the striking air traffic controllers of PATCO in August, 1981, the AFL-CIO did little more than to organize a large protest rally in Washington, D.C. a month later. Although more than 250,000 union members and their supporters joined the rally, the action did little more than provide a public forum for union leaders and members to vent their anger at Reagan's bold maneuver. To some degree, the AFL-CIO's relative indifference can be attributed to the fact that its leadership had been annoyed that PATCO was one of three member unions to endorse Reagan, a Republican, with the hopes that the endorsement might persuade him to lend a sympathetic ear toward their grievances. Yet their response, or lack thereof, in the face of a bold attack was the norm within the "house of labor." When the United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) struck International Paper's mill in Jay, Maine, the union received considerably support from state and local AFL-CIO councils in the northeast, but no help from the national federation in coordinating what became a pivotal, seventeen-month losing struggle in the paper industry.[19]

Desperate for help and mired in prolonged disputes, Larry Solomon of UAW local 751 in Decatur joined a contingent of Staley Road Warriors, having developed close ties through solidarity protests and speaking to unions across the country about their disputes, to travel to Bal Harbour, Florida for the 1995 AFL-CIO national convention. Hoping to draw support from the federation that had largely shunned their struggles which, by February 1995 had dragged on for years, Solomon told the *New York Times*, "The AFL-CIO has the organization and national

[19] Julius G. Getman, *The Betrayal of Local 14* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University ILR Press, 1999); Peter Kellman, *Divided We Fall: The Story of the Paperworker's Union and the Future of Labor* (Croton-on-Hudson, NY: Apex Press, 2004).

standing to raise money better than we can."[20] It might have, but it lacked the gumption to muster them on behalf of the activists and their cause. When the organizers wrote collective letters to their union presidents explaining the purpose of their upcoming trip, they were flatly rebuffed. UAW president Owen Bieber responded that the workers ought to stay home, declaring that a trip to the convention "served no purpose." The group came anyway, and was shocked at the class divisions between them and the national leadership. While the rank-and-file contingent scraped together just enough money to share tattered rooms in a run-down motel, the AFL-CIO leadership enjoyed posh accommodations at the Bal Harbour Sheraton hotel, complete with large pools and waterfalls spread over acres of lush landscape, to which leaders traveled in limousines. On the convention floor, the AFL-CIO endorsed their cause, pledging to come to Decatur, and raise the stakes and financial support for their struggles. In the hallways, however, the contingent was treated with disdain and dismay for their breaching the protocol of the organization by arriving on their own, and leafleting outside the convention to publicize their disputes. Illinois AFL-CIO president Don Johnson scolded the group, "You guys are an embarrassment to the labor movement." Some national union leaders did arrive afterward in Decatur, particularly on behalf of the Staley struggle, and donated tens of thousands of dollars to help the families of locked-out workers. Yet despite pledges by the new AFL-CIO leadership of John Sweeney and Richard Trumka, elected in October 1995, to support the mounting corporate campaign against Staley, never materialized. The federation and its member unions were more concerned about maintaining protocol and jurisdiction than extending much-needed support to beleaguered local unions.[21]

[20] Louis Uchitelle, "Labor Chiefs Get Glimpse of Casualties," *New York Times* February 23, 1995, B8.
[21] Steven K. Ashby and C.J., Hawking, *Staley: The Fight for a New American Labor Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 230-232, 296-300.

Nor did the UAW, which widely publicized its flirtations with international solidarity with Caterpillar workers abroad in 1994, coordinate or even continue such efforts in conjunction with its seventeen-month strike from June 1994 to its demise in December 1995. Activists within the UAW developed close ties with other rank-and-file workers and groups around the nation, having formed their own group of Road Warriors in 1994. They also spoke regularly to UAW leaders and members at the union's educational center in Black Lake, Michigan. Yet these connections existed largely within traditional union channels, and did not branch out to other community groups or unions internationally, where Caterpillar and other large multinational corporations increasingly operated—and American-based unions rarely did. Among local 974's leaders, there appeared to be little consideration of this avenue for potentially new allies that could have pressured Caterpillar on an international front and coordinated, for the first time, international solidarity actions against the company. Jerry Brown, who was president of local 974 during the 1990s, recalled their hosting the 1994 World Council of Caterpillar Workers, but no other international initiatives. "There wasn't much [international solidarity] I was aware of," he said. When asked whether the local union, rather than the International, had discussed extending its campaign against Caterpillar to incorporate the company's foreign workers, Brown responded, "No. I would have thought that was the International's job."[22]

The answer illustrates more than a disregard for fostering international solidarity. The relationship between the local and the International was one framed by rigid boundaries—that anything occurring on the international level, as if by definition, must have been the International's responsibility, while the locals handled what was in closer proximity. Yet each shared in the failure to cultivate such ties, resulting in a broad-based yet ultimately effort that

[22] Brown interview.

could effectively pressure the company to settle the strike by significantly impeding its production. Nor did the UAW develop a corporate campaign that engaged or threatened Caterpillar's vast international operations, which the United Steelworkers of America had done with remarkable success against a strident push for concessions by the Ravenswood Aluminum Company of West Virginia.[23] The union kept its focus on local and national actions and solidarity networks, rather than developing new and innovative tactics that elsewhere proved to be successful, and applying them on a broader scale to match Caterpillar's power.

Once they walked out for the second time on June 20, 1994, the UAW did not re-enter the factories until it admitted defeat in early December, 1995, agreeing to return to work without a contract. It was a humiliating loss for the UAW, made all the worse by the fact that beginning in July 1994, the International union shelled out millions in strike and health benefits, $300 to each member per week in strike pay and for some up to $600 per month in medical coverage, in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent members from crossing strike lines. Frustration mounted among strikers as fellow union members joined roughly 1,800 new hires to allow the company, however fitfully, to keep churning out production.[24] The presence of some African Americans among those crossing the line infused the strike with racial tensions, with claims that some strikers pelted the strikebreakers with epithets. For many African American workers, this was their first opportunity to work at Caterpillar after years of exclusion from some of the best-paying jobs that remained in the region. This was not lost on one black strikebreaker, who said, "Black people need to make sure we're getting some of those jobs, and if the people on strike

[23] Tom Juravich and Kate Bronfenbrenner, *Ravenswood: The Steelworkers' Victory and the Revival of American Labor* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

[24] Here I stridently disagree with Phil McCall's valorization of the solidarity and class consciousness that striking UAW members displayed in the 1990s. While these existed to a considerable degree, McCall fails to evaluate the limitations in solidarity readily apparent in the sheer numbers of strikebreakers within the UAW itself. See Phil McCall, "'We Had to Stick Together:' Individual Preferences, Collective Struggle, and the Formation of Social Consciousness," *Science and Society*, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 2008, 147-181.

lose their jobs, there's going to be a lot more job openings."[25] Jimmy Williams, an African American security guard at Caterpillar's East Peoria factory, said he and others were peppered with epithets during the second strike.[26] Another black strikebreaker told the *Peoria Journal-Star* that she was called racial slurs by picketers who hid under the cover of darkness before and after work at the company's Mapleton plant. "They don't do it daily," she said. "They do it when they feel they can get away with it."[27]

A couple of elements of this are important to consider when evaluating the veracity of the accusations of racism. On the one hand, the company went to great lengths to negatively portray the UAW, often getting help from the pro-company newspaper the *Peoria Journal-Star*. Some of the charges against strikers for hurling racist epithets, including in one well-publicized case in York, Pennsylvania, were dropped due to lack of evidence.[28] On the other, race deeply divided the region, for some sections of Peoria and some of the outlying towns in which many workers resided were nearly all-white, and therefore places that created discursive and psychological spaces between races that complemented the physical space separating whites from 'others.' It is in such spaces that racial stereotypes, fears, and anxieties can readily develop. Also, the Peoria region has a long history in which racism has percolated to the surface, even if appearing to be dormant for some time. Additionally, tensions were running high among strikers, who faced the loss of their jobs as well as the failure of their strike, who watched workers cross their picket lines on a daily basis and were powerless to prevent it. The common elements of frustration and powerlessness spurred some to adopt different and often surreptitious means of striking back, namely the use of violence against strikebreakers. Jack rocks, which were bent pieces of metal

[25] Pam Adams, "Family First: Confessions of a Line Crosser," *Peoria Journal-Star,* August 3, 1994, A4.
[26] Pam Adams, "Racial Slurs: 'This Ain't No School Integration," *Peoria Journal-Star,* September 14, 1994, A4.
[27] Bob Bouyea, "Black Fears Racial War Will Erupt on the Picket Lines," *Peoria Journal-Star,* September 27, 1994, C1.
[28] Ibid.

with sharp ends commonly used to puncture tires, had been used in strikes at Caterpillar for years. One striker carried the threat of violence to a greater extreme in 1994 when he was arrested for possession of a box of small-scale explosives on his way to the East Peoria plant.[29] That some strikers may have resorted to shouting racist epithets during such a contentious strike, particularly in an anonymous manner that rendered them difficult to verify, is realistic and reasonable to conclude that they likely occurred.

Peoria at Century' End: Refashioning an Urban Economy and Identity

As the hostilities began in earnest between Caterpillar and the UAW, the Peoria region found itself in a struggle to revitalize its economy. Faced with the decline of its industrial base, Peoria attempted to wean itself from its reliance upon Caterpillar by revitalizing its flagging riverfront area and utilizing the Illinois River as a natural resource with economic potential to draw tourists. It cast a wide net in creating job opportunities by becoming the site of a new federal prison, and a site for gambling as a potential area for new economic growth.

First proposed to the Peoria city council by architect Angelos Demetriou in 1981, plans for a casino on the Illinois River were received favorably but delayed when Caterpillar's fortunes took a nose dive in the early 1980s. Delayed while the company recovered, East Peoria eventually moved forward with plans for a casino on a ship that would dock on the river and also take patrons on tours as they gambled. Nearly ten years to the day after Demetriou proposed it, the riverboat casino Par-A-Dice opened on September 15, 1991, Part of a broader riverfront revitalization campaign, the casino spurred the growth of new service-sector businesses such as

[29] Anita Szoke, "Judge Spares Former Cat Striker Jail in Explosives Case," *Peoria Journal-Star,* November 1, 1997, A9.

restaurants and hotels along both sides of the river to accommodate patrons from across central Illinois.[30]

Adopting the casino as a potential revenue stream placed the Peoria area squarely within a broader acceptance of the gambling industry in the early 1990s, as cash-strapped states and communities particularly in deindustrialized urban areas turned to gambling as they came to grips with declining industrial bases. By 1990, manufacturing jobs constituted just one-fifth of Peoria County's total employment.[31] While just two states had legalized gambling in 1988, by 1994 there were twenty-three.[32] The opening of Par-A-Dice followed a similar move by the Quad Cities to the west, which tried to boost its sagging economy and complement its own fading industrial base. Two years after Par-A-Dice opened, the state of Indiana legalized riverboat gambling, resulting in two large casinos dotting the lakefront in Gary, Indiana, where steel mills used to dominate the city's landscape. Its two casinos each earn over $100 million in revenue, drawing patrons from throughout the Chicagoland area. While Gary and the state of Indiana reaped tens of millions of dollars in fees from the casinos throughout the 1990s, this money did not necessarily filter into the inner city area for neighborhood improvements or good-paying jobs for residents. In Gary, the rise of a gambling-based economy coincided with and may have exacerbated the city's drastic spike in crime rates, which routinely made Gary "the murder capital of America."[33]

---

[30] Mark Butzow, "Ten Years later, Par-A-Dice is Here," *Peoria Journal-Star,* September 15, 1991, A1.
[31] Dean Olsen, "Why Peoria? Birth Rates Rose with Financial Strife in 1980s," *Peoria Journal-Star*, February 7, 1994, A6.
[32] Congressional Record, *Proceedings and Debates of the 105th Congress, Second Session* Volume 144—part 14, September 9, 1998 to September 21, 1998 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1998), 20292.
[33] Cathy H.C. Hsu ed., *Legalized Casino Gaming in the United States: The Economic and Social Impact* (New York: Hapworth Hospitality Press, 1999), 100; Sandra L. Barnes, *The Cost of Being Poor: A Comparative Study of Life in Poor Urban Neighborhoods in Gary, Indiana* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 21, 46-48.

Gambling arrived in the Peoria area at the same time that the region's industrial decline hit with full force, affecting all residents but none harder than its African American community. In 1980, 34.5 percent of black Peoria County workers were in manufacturing. By 1990, the share had dropped to twenty-one percent. At the same time, the percentage of blacks in the lower-wage retail sector, including those in the food-service industry, rose from ten to twenty-one percent during this span.[34] Historically excluded from the best industrial jobs for decades, African Americans now faced worse job prospects than the rest of the mostly white region as the number of well-paying, unionized industrial jobs declined.

Gambling revenues and the growth of the waterfront's service-sector economy did little to abate crime rates in the city, where most blacks in the area lived. In 1995, Peoria had the second-high violent crime rate among the biggest cities in Illinois, behind only Chicago and ahead of Rockford, Springfield, and Aurora.[35] The region also strove to draw jobs by providing the land for a $53 million federal prison in Pekin, which opened in October 1994. Housing over 1,200 inmates, the medium-security prison employs approximately 300 guards and staff. Although the prison provided some jobs, hiring-age restrictions excluded many industrial workers in the region, for the Federal Bureau of Prisons capped the age for its new hires at 37.[36]

As the region struggled with new economic challenges to reshape its economy, it continued to face long-standing issues of racism and spatial segregation. Accusations of racism and racist incidents surfaced again in the mid-1990s, illustrating the persistence of deep-seated divisions and, for some, resistance to changing race relations in the Peoria area. They also share a common thread with the UAW-Caterpillar labor disputes, for the community exhibited an

[34] Olsen, "Why Peoria?" A6.
[35] Elaine Hopkins, "Study: Peoria's Environment Poor for Children," *Peoria Journal-Star*, June 15, 1995, A10.
[36] Terry Bibo, "Prison Puts Money in Local Hands," *Peoria Journal-Star*, May 2, 1994, B1; "Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down," editorial, *Peoria Journal-Star*, June 20, 1994, A4.

overarching concern with negative perceptions of Peoria, and the desire to move on with life as usual without sufficiently addressing or analyzing the implications of the strikes or the resurfacing of racism.

Matthew Hale, a white supremacist student from East Peoria, drew national attention—and much embarrassment for Peorians—beginning in the 1990s with his racist pronouncements and organizing. In April 1995, he ran for East Peoria's city council, and the results startled and angered many in the community. At first glance, he only received 546 votes and finished last. However, Hale received the support of roughly sixteen percent of the voters. The most pertinent aspect of the election is not the number of votes he garnered, but rather that he received that many when it was no secret that he openly espoused racist viewpoints, and was roundly criticized in the media for them before the election. He did not receive 546 votes despite his views but rather because of them, suggesting that pockets of strident racism similar to those that historically supported the Klan remained in the area. He also received them from a city and at a time in which deindustrialization had diminished the region's industrial base, and good jobs particularly for young people were scarce. The threat that Hale posed, and the connections between the election and deindustrialization were not lost on the *Journal-Star*, which editorialized that if unchecked, Hale might reach the status of David Duke, the former Klan member who made a strong push for Louisiana governor in 1991, capturing the majority of the state's white vote. "If 546 voted for him this time, how about the next time he runs, when unemployment might be higher and people angrier? We shouldn't have to remind people that this is how David Duke got started in Louisiana. Hale needs to be checked along the way, before he

gets that far. He and his message are destructive. People need to be warned. This election is a wake-up call."[37]

Hale's New Church of the Creator in East Peoria, later called the World Church of the Creator, became the source of a deadly outburst of violence in 1999, after Hale, who had graduated from Southern Illinois University with a law degree, was denied a state license to practice. Two days later, World Church follower Benjamin Smith resigned from the church and immediately went on a shooting spree in Illinois and Indiana, killing two and wounding eighteen more before committing suicide. Hale claimed his organization was not responsible for the tragedy by claiming that they did not advocate violence, despite having done so in the organization's literature. In 2005, Hale was sentenced to a forty-year prison term for trying to solicit an FBI informant to murder federal judge Joan Lefkow, who had ruled against Hale's Church in a trademark dispute over the group's name, and whose husband and mother were later murdered in their Chicago home.[38]

While Hale and these events drew considerable media attention and harsh consequences, other lesser-known incidents showed that racist undercurrents ran deeper than Hale and his organization. Peoria city councilman Gary Sandberg found himself briefly in hot water in 1998 when, in a confrontation over a parking spot with a young black woman, called her a "nigger" and other epithets. Despite calls for his resignation from the *Peoria Journal-Star*, the city council, and community leaders, Sandberg apologized, attributed his outburst to a bad day, and remained. His long history with the council, in addition to considerable public support from

[37] "From Matt Hale, A Wake Up Call," editorial, *Peoria Journal-Star*, April 6, 1995, A4.
[38] Matt O'Connor, "Hale Gets 40 years for Plot to Kill Judge," *Chicago Tribune*, April 7, 2005, 1.

many white constituents, enabled his re-election to an at-large seat on the council.[39] Pekin witnessed a brief spate of cross burnings in March 1996 when a local white family with black friends breached the city's racial lines. Brothers Damon and Christopher Nance, and friend Timothy Wood, were charged with a hate crime when they erected and burned a cross on the front lawn of Pekin resident James Camp, whose fifteen-year-old daughter was dating a black boy. Damon Nance told police he did this "to tell black people to stay out of this neighborhood." This occurred two days after two other white teenagers also burned a cross in Camp's yard.[40]

These events fit within Peoria's history of racial problems, but also occurred within the important context of deindustrialization and fewer high-wage jobs, with particularly pernicious consequences for the area's youth. According to the 1990 census, poverty rates in Peoria County were 14.5 percent, well above the state average of 11.9 percent. Even though Tazewell County, where Pekin and East Peoria are located, had a considerably lower county-wide poverty rate of 9.1 percent, those two cities comprised the bulk of the county's poor. While unemployment rates were moderate at around 7 percent, most jobs created were in the low-wage service sector. As Sharron Matthews, executive director of the Chicago-based Public Welfare Coalition of Illinois, succinctly stated, "You can't base a whole economic recovery for a whole class of people on [jobs at] Burger King." The dearth of good jobs in the region placed greater burdens on local relief programs. Norma Weaver, director of the Peoria's regional Salvation Army post, attested to an increase in Peoria's population of the working poor, adding, "They're not moving up at all." Many new jobs that the region's economy created demanded college education and greater skills development than its working-class population could afford. Economic stagnation and

[39] "Resign, Gary Sandberg," editorial, *Peoria Journal-Star*, November 5, 1998, A4; Pam Adams, "This Area Has History of Racial Turmoil," *Peoria Journal-Star*, July 28, 1999, A4.
[40] Anita Szoke, "Hate-Crime Charges Revived," *Peoria Journal-Star*, July 11, 1997, A1, A9.

diminished prospects for the future intersected with a troubled history of racism to feed a resurgence of racial tensions.[41]

Yet many in the community believed that the solutions for the region's economic woes lay elsewhere. Global trade, with Caterpillar as the engine of revival, was vital for the region's recovery. The *Journal-Star* at once admitted Peoria's intertwined fortunes with the company's, and articulated an acceptance of its place within—and reliance upon—a more global economy. "The future health of Caterpillar, and of central Illinois, is dependent upon a revival of economies around the world. As long as businesses in Brazil, Australia and Europe aren't doing well, neither will Caterpillar. We here in Peoria—or in the United States—are no longer a self-sufficient island able to flourish on our own. As long as we're part of the world community, our fate and our future will be tied to others throughout the globe."[42] Although its manufacturing base diminished as Caterpillar decentralized its factories, Peoria remained no less reliant upon the company for its well-being. Its identification as "part of the world community" was paradoxically still shaped by its ties to Caterpillar, even as the company's had cut some of its own ties to Peoria.

Making "an industrial hellhole:" Working-Class Insecurity in the Era of Globalization

Upon returning in December 1995, striking workers faced the same dehumanization that helped launch the second strike. Forced the first day back to sit through a four-hour orientation on the post-strike work rules, which included a ban on using the words "strike" or "scab," the company assigned workers identification numbers for time cards, rather than using their names, just as they did after the 1991-1992 strike. This prompted Stephen Mitchell, an employee at the

[41] Dean Olsen, "Upbeat Economic Statistics Don't Tell Whole Story," *Peoria Journal-Star*,, June 25, 1995, A14.
[42] "What's Bad for the World is Bad for CAT," editorial, *Peoria Journal-Star*, January 28, 1993, A6.

Mossville plant, to say the returning striker was "treated more or less like a convict or a prisoner of war" than an employee. A fellow striker maintained the analogy of war but characterized the immediate post-strike climate more bluntly, saying "It's an industrial hellhole right now. You've really got to toe the line. They [Caterpillar] won, and they're not gracious victors."[43]

Company repression notwithstanding, the shop-floor battles hardly ended there. Many strikers wore strike t-shirts below long-sleeve shirts, plastered their lunch boxes with pro-union bumper stickers, and refused to back down from the aggressive tactics and posturing of supervisors. This led to more disciplinary actions, most later ruled illegal, swelling the case load before the NLRB. Workers' resistance on the shop floor entailed greater risks than before, with management emboldened after twice defeating two UAW strikes in four years. The workplace became a more militarized space, according to UAW steward Mike Legel who said that members of Vance Security, who were stationed around the factory during the strikes, were often present on the factory floor to escort workers to and from disciplinary meetings with management. Even for union members attuned to industrial conflict, this proved most unnerving, and was intended to have that effect. Legel described being called into meeting with management, after the second strike, in which Vance was present.

> Well they brought these storm troopers in to me, they had two of them, one with a big flashlight and the other guy with a video camera, and they stayed right behind me with the video camera, took me and marched me up to the office and all this. Of course I was the committeeman, so there wasn't anybody to represent me, so they brought this poor steward in and he was shaking like a leaf, you know. He said, 'What are we going to do? What are we going to do?' I said, Just go back. And they said, 'What, you don't want union representation?' I said, What is this? This is ridiculous. First thing, you've got to

[43] Douglas Fruehling, "Recalls at Cat Elicit Recoils from UAW," *Peoria Journal-Star*, December 12, 1995, A1. See also the emotional account that striker and Decatur local 751 Jack Hayes kept after returning to work in December 1995, detailing company repression on the shop floor, tensions between strikers and strikebreakers, and the stress he experienced enduring this period, ILIR, Box 12, Folder 13, UIA.

> tell this guy with the camera to back up a step or he's going to be wearing that thing. What they were trying to do was get me to do something stupid on film, you know. That's the level of intimidation. I mean, you're talking scaring the bedoobie out of people. There were people that were literally scared to death that these Vance guys were going to take them out and beat the crap out of them. That was the level of intimidation for many years at Caterpillar.[44]

Others responded with anger and innovation. During the second strike, a group of rank-and-file militants formed the "Blue Shirts" to mock and mirror Vance Security members. After the strike ended, they became shop-floor militants who donned plain navy blue t-shirts similar to those that Vance Security wore. They followed and monitored Vance members when they saw them in the workplace and developed an alternative symbol of union solidarity to skirt the company's policies prohibiting strike-related attire.[45]

Within this repressive climate, strikers used surreptitious methods to circumvent the rules against discussing the strikes or openly mentioning scabs. Those who crossed the picket line were often placed right next to returning strikers, increasing the chances for harassment, conflict and, if it occurred, disciplinary action. To avoid trouble, strikers distributed anonymous cartoons, leaflets, and poems around work stations and in bathrooms, disgorging their anger on paper in a full-throated, often profane fashion that, articulated aloud, carried great risk. Printed messages asking "What is a Strikebreaker?" ridiculed "the scab" as "a traitor" who "cares only for himself…He is an enemy to himself, to his recent age and to all posterity." Others were less refined, imbued with ribald gendered language clearly intended to humiliate those who crossed the picket line as more than cowardly, but the antithesis of upstanding, heterosexual, pro-union masculinity. One such letter, written by "the shithouse poet," contrasted the "men with guts" on the picket line with "scabs…the company sluts" whose working during the strike rendered them

[44] Mike Legel Interview at the Tremont Public Library, October 23, 2006.
[45] Ibid; Cappy Kidd, "Unionists Honor Life of UAW Fighter at Cat," *The Militant*, Vol. 63, No. 9, March 8, 1999.

"lilly livered" [Sic.] laborers whose service for Caterpillar was equated with sexually servicing men.[46]

The struggles at Caterpillar contained key elements in the multifaceted attack on American unions, and the purchasing power and overall economic security of working-class Americans. Plant closings, the transfer of unionized industrial jobs to non-union states and abroad, automation, and a more staunchly anti-union business class resulted in a freefall of union membership in the US. In the overall number of union members, the decline began in 1980 but, in the percentage of unionized workers, this decline occurred slowly from a postwar high of nearly 35% in 1954 and, as the workforce expanded, accelerated particularly from the early 1970s to the present. (See Table 5.2) This drastically reduced the strength and influence of organized labor, reducing if not virtually eliminating the presence of unions in industries in which they had a long-established presence.

It also hastened the trend, paralleling the declining unionization rates and wage stagnation among US workers. Adjusted for inflation, real average wages in 1973 were $9 per hour. A quarter-century later, they were $8 per hour.[47] At the same time, through a combination of tax cuts and spiraling executive compensation packages, the average pay for CEOs vis-à-vis the average American worker mushroomed from 36 times workers' average pay in 1976 to 131 times the level in 1993, to an astronomical 369 tiomes the average worker in 2005.[48] The contrasting fortunes between the working and wealthy classes were not lost on multibillionaire

[46] "What is a Strikebreaker?" and "WHY AM I A SCAB?" UAW Local 974 Strike Materials, UAW Local 974 Archives, digital copy in author's possession, accessed April 24, 2011.
[47] Lawrence Mishel, Jared Bernstein, and John Schmitt, *The State of Working America, 1998-1999* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).
[48] Joann Lublin and Scott Thurm, "Behind Soaring Executive Pay, Decades of Failed Restraint," *Wall Street Journal*, October 12, 2006, A1, cited in Steven Greenhouse, *The Big Squeeze: Tough Times for the American Worker* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 41, 314 fn 22.

Warren Buffett, who noted that over the previous twenty years, "the average American went exactly nowhere on the economic scale; he's been on a treadmill while the superrich have been on a spaceship."[49] CEOs benefited handsomely from taking tough positions against organized labor, including Caterpillar Don Fites. Amidst the company's efforts to impose lower wages and benefits for new hires, slash overtime pay, and hire temporary workers, Fites's compensation rose 41 percent between 1994, when it was $1.8 million, and 1995 when he was paid $3.1 million. Reaping the rewards for breaking the back of the UAW put him in the top 100 best-compensated CEOs.[50]

For the industrial working class in Peoria and the US, globalization was not a harbinger of economic promise, but rather a cudgel wielded against them to exact concessions, to weaken their power in the workplace and the political arena. The capacity of companies to operate on an international scale had a direct impact on unionization rates in the US, hastening the decline of American unions by increasing not only their ability to relocate elsewhere—in the US or abroad—but also their threats to do so. This depleted the ranks of unions both by attrition and preventing them from replenishing their numbers in organizing drives. In her 2000 study analyzing the impact that capital flight has had on union organizing, Kate Bronfenbrenner found that under the pretense of maintaining global competitiveness, "a majority of employers use the threat of plant closure and capital flight in organizing drives and at the bargaining table," with many in fact following through on those threats. The passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 exacerbated this trend, resulting in the loss of an estimated 440,000 jobs to Mexico and Canada, while foreign direct investment by US firms abroad increased threefold in the 1990s, to $122 billion. Far from all jobs lost went overseas, however.

[49] Greenhouse, *The Big Squeeze*, 41.
[50] Douglas Fruehling, "Compensation Brings Fites $3.1 Million," *Peoria Journal-Star,* March 2, 1996, A1.

The Brandow Company's *U.S. Interstate Business Migration Report* estimates that from 1996 to 1999 "16,728 firms representing more than 517,000 jobs relocated between states" and "about six times that number probably relocated to new county jurisdictions inside their home states." Unions in the manufacturing sector of the economy were especially hard hit, facing threats to relocate during the majority of organizing drives. Bronfenbrenner found that the more enmeshed in the global economy that companies were, in their customer and manufacturing bases, the more likely they were to threaten to relocate the jobs of American workers, reducing the success rates of organizing drives. These threats increased throughout the 1990s, serving as an object lesson to industrial workers that, should they attempt to organize, they risked losing their jobs at a time when they had already become scarce.[51]

While Bronfenbrenner's detailed study focuses primarily on organizing drives, its implications undoubtedly encompass the insecurity that beset Caterpillar's unionized workers and America's working class overall at the end of the twentieth century. The strikes and prolonged strife with the UAW became a convenient pretense for the company to relocate production work elsewhere as part of an aggressive "Southern Strategy" that emulated the shift to the South and West that auto manufacturers initiated beginning in the 1950s to avoid dealing with the then-powerful auto union.[52] After years of threatening to close it, in 1998 Caterpillar finally shuttered its York, Pennsylvania factory, a site of heated conflict throughout the 1990s that the company's looming threats intensified all the more. The production performed at York was split between two smaller, non-union factories in the South, with a new facility in

[51] Kate Bronfenbrenner, *Uneasy Terrain: The Impact of Capital Mobility on Workers, Wages, and Union Organizing* (Cornell University ILR School: Research Studies and Reports, 2000), 5-7, 28-36.
[52] Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 166-168; Philip Scranton, *The Second Wave: Southern Industrialization from the 1940s to the 1970s* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2007), 224-227.

Morganton, North Carolina making oil coolers and pistons, and a second plant in Danville, Kentucky manufacturing track equipment. Union officials suspected that control over the workplace as much as union avoidance, and paying lower wages and benefits, spurred Caterpillar's shift southward. "They're called 'focus factories,'" said Terry Ordorff, bargaining chairman for United Auto Workers Local 786 in York. "They break them down into very small plants -- into less than 100 people. It's for total control of your workforce."[53] Closing York also sent the message to the UAW, whose workers still toiled without a contract, that other factories, including one in Mossville the company also suggested may close, could be next. Labor relations expert Bruce Nissen aptly summarized Caterpillar's strategy when he said, "It creates fear and insecurity all over," he said. "Plant closings are precursors to more demands on the union."[54]

Within a week, the company announced that it would transfer hose line and engine production work remaining in York to a new factory it was building in Oxford, Mississippi. What proved especially enticing was the package of tax breaks that Oxford offered the company, including a ten-year exemption on all local taxes except for schools, in addition to land for the factory worth $200,000, and city-installed roads and utilities for the new plant.[55] In sum, the company was willing to decentralize production previously done in one unionized factory, to three non-union ones in three different states, with the lower wages and tax breaks from the city offsetting shipping costs for this component production. Although not new to American workers, Caterpillar displayed a brazen quality in its strategy of union avoidance, for it had still not settled its dispute with the UAW, and had moved rapidly after the union's failed second strike left the UAW exhausted, financially strapped, and suing for peace.

---

[53] Valerie Lilley, "Caterpillar Plans Two More Plants," *Peoria Journal-Star*, January 31, 1997, A1.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Christopher Wills, "Is Caterpillar Shunning Unions?" *Indianapolis Star*, February 26, 1997, E1-E2; Valerie Lilley, "Cat Picks Fourth Plant Site," *Peoria Journal-Star*, February 7, 1997, A1.

The Settlement and Its Implications

Caterpillar and the UAW reached a tentative agreement in February 1998, with the union agreeing to concede ground on work rules, two-tier pay, and temporary workers, and dropping the 441 outstanding unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB. As much as that was for workers to accept, they most vehemently opposed a non-contractual term of the proposed settlement: the UAW was willing to send the cases and fates of 50 terminated workers to an arbitrator in exchange for the company agreeing to bring back the other 110 whom it fired. Rank-and-file militants within the union, especially those in the Blue Shirt brigade (many of whom were fired), were outraged and organized an aggressive Vote-No campaign against the tentative agreement, distributing thousands of leaflets to members. In a raucous meeting at Bradley University's Robertson Memorial Field House on Sunday, February 22, workers vented their displeasure with the bargaining committee and the UAW International, regularly disrupting speeches, repeatedly calling local 974 president Jim Clingan a "sellout," and littering the gymnasium floor with flyers and summaries of the agreement. With the uncertain fate of the remaining 50 fired workers fueling opposition to the agreement, UAW members resoundingly rejected the tentative agreement. The overall vote was fifty-eight percent against, forty-two for, with the bulk of the pro-agreement votes coming from Aurora local 145, whose members voted overwhelmingly (eighty-two percent) for the agreement. Most other locals, however, from whom most of the fired workers came, soundly defeated it, with sixty-one percent of local 974, sixty-four percent of local 2096 in Pontiac, and over ninety percent of local 751 in Decatur—whose membership was perhaps the most militant and the least likely to cross its picket lines—voting no.[56]

[56] "Brothers and Sisters…" *UAW Local 974* News, Vol. 46, No. 3, 1, 3, UAW Local 974 Strike Materials, UAW Local 974 Archives, digital copy in author's possession, accessed April 24, 2011; Paul Gordon, "No Deal," *Peoria*

Solidarity weighed heavily on the minds of those voting. Steve Spring, an engine assembler and thirty-year employee, vowed to keep fighting until all 160 terminated employees returned. "If solidarity means anything, it means all of us," he said. "It'll be generations before all this is over. I'd rather have everybody back instead of better pay for myself."[57] With most of the membership refusing to budge on the issue of the fired workers, the press fretted that the agreement's rejection would further brand central Illinois "no happy place to do business," and urged a rapid settlement before Caterpillar decided to "continue to pull jobs out of this community."[58] To the editorial board of the *Journal-Star*, whose coverage was largely favorable to Caterpillar during the disputes, maintaining solidarity was a luxury Peoria could ill afford.

The terms of the contract were harsh and, especially in the areas of work rules, regressive for the UAW. In exchange for pay raises, increases in pension benefits for future retirees, and job guarantees for all employees at the time of the settlement, the company gained considerable latitude to impose two-tier wage structures, flexibility in work rules allowing Caterpillar to change work schedules and thus avoid paying overtime, and the ability to hire temporary employees to perform union jobs.[59] The new contract eased restrictions on subcontracting work, which the company used creatively to its advantage, according to Dave LaHood, by encouraging workers on some specialty assembly lines to quit and form their own independent company, to which the company would then contract work they and others had previously done as union workers. In some factories, this has created a crazy-quilt pattern of union, temporary, and newly

---

Journal-Star, February 23, 1998, A1; Frank Forrestal and Cappy Kidd, "Caterpillar Workers Vote Down Contract," *The Militant*, Vol. 62 No. 9, March 9, 1998; Christopher Wills, "Union to Drop 441 Unfair Labor Practice Charges for Contract at Caterpillar," *Labor Notes*, March 1998, Vol. 228.

[57] Clare Howard, Valerie Lilley, and Erin Shea, "Amnesty for 'Scabs' Sticks in Members' Craws," *Peoria Journal-Star*, February 23, 1998, A1.

[58] "Making a Stand for the UAW," editorial, *Peoria Journal-Star*, February 24, 1998, A4.

[59] Paul Gordon, "Union: Yes; Caterpillar Workers Vote to End Lengthy Labor Dispute," *Peoria Journal-Star*, March 23, 1998, A1.

subcontracted workers, fracturing shop-floor cohesion among departments.[60] Nor did the final contract include the contractual provision, which had existed for decades, requiring the company to pay the union for the time its committee chairs spent on union business, ending the UAW's pending lawsuit on the matter.[61]

It was a major blow to the once-proud union and its Caterpillar locals, for although they could take pride in having saved their union after being on strike with little hope of returning in 1995, local 974 bargaining chair Jerry Baker's post-strike claim that "Union busting doesn't play in Peoria" rang hollow.[62] The union was not busted, but its power was severely circumscribed. Additionally, the company's strong stand on concessions that pushed the UAW to the brink of decimation at Caterpillar did indeed play in Peoria and pay dividends for the company. It not only successfully severed itself from the pattern bargaining system with other earthmoving companies. Its willingness to take on the UAW and achieve steep, long-term cuts in wages, benefits, and job security for its future workforce in turn became the unofficial pattern that other companies sought from their employees, including those the UAW represented. Even before the UAW settled with Caterpillar, its long fight persuaded UAW members at John Deere to accept a contract similar to the one it brokered with Caterpillar. Others such as American Axle in western New York, auto parts manufacturers Dana, Visteon, and Delphi, and the Big Three itself, followed suit and gained significant cost savings from the UAW.[63] While two-tier wage systems did not originate with the Caterpillar-UAW battles, nor were they entirely new to the UAW in

[60] LaHood interview.
[61] "Cat, Union Agree to Dismiss Supreme Court Case over Pay," *Peoria Journal-Star,* March 24, 1998, B2.
[62] Paul Gordon, Valerie Lilley, "Lessons for Cat, the Union," *Peoria Journal-Star*, March 24, 1998, A1.
[63] "Contract Creates Two-Tier Scale at Deere," *Peoria Journal-Star,* October 7, 1997, A1; Greenhouse, *Big Squeeze*, 264; Jane Slaughter, "Auto Union Embraces Two-Tier Wages," *Labor Notes,* October 1, 2003.

the 1990s, they certainly accelerated afterward, for the union's defeat revealed that if Caterpillar's UAW members could be forced to accede on the issue, others could as well.[64]

The effects of the 1998 contract and the defeat of the UAW are hard to over-estimate. Caterpillar's victory has achieved to a considerable degree a reversal in the psychology of what workers ought to reasonably expect in a unionized workplace. Whereas workers before the 1990s, even during the era of mass layoffs in the 1980s, could anticipate degrees of security and at least gradual improvement in wages and benefits through their job and union membership, Caterpillar eroded that expectation, certainly for its production workers. The way to a better life was not through negotiating a better union contract that provides better wages and benefits, but rather through "opportunities for promotion…if not with Caterpillar, then at another employer." As *New York Times* reporter Louis Uchitelle termed it, "Driving a forklift or working on an assembly line for 20 years should not be a career goal."[65] The contrast in the prospects of long-term security for new workers at Caterpillar, between 1966 and 2006, could not have been clearer.

The patterns of deindustrialization at Caterpillar—through automation, the elimination of union jobs through the decentralization of its factories to nonunion states, the innovative methods of in-house subcontracting, and transferring jobs overseas—coalesced to eliminate a key feature of the company's industrial workforce: the passing of jobs from one generation to the next. There were far fewer union jobs by the end of the twentieth century, with local 974 representing approximately 5,600 of the 9,500 total UAW members at Caterpillar. This in effect grandfathered out the familial ties to jobs that factory workers had developed over generations, with older workers holding onto their jobs longer, and few new members replenishing their

[64] Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Great U-Turn: Corporate Restructuring and the Polarizing of America* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 42-43.
[65] Louis Uchitelle, "Two Tiers, Slipping Into One," *New York Times*, February 26, 2006, Business Section, 1.

ranks. Diminished job prospects had a particularly adverse effect on working-class Peorians, who found it more difficult to afford to pay for college education for their children. Whereas in the past, many Caterpillar employees chose factory work over attending college because the pay, benefits, and security were good, the end of the twentieth century brought a new, persistent era of insecurity.

The circumstances of Mike Legel, now retired from Caterpillar, illustrate this new era of trans-generational insecurity that workers in Peoria and America face. His son works at ATS, a computer services company at Caterpillar, but is not a Caterpillar employee for ATS is technically a company to which Caterpillar outsources work. The differences between what his job provides him at ATS, and what his father's job did at Caterpillar, are stark and reveal the setbacks and struggles for the new working-class generation.

> I am tickled to death that my son has got a decent-paying job. He's making $12/hr. He can't afford to move out of the house. He bought a new car and that's it. He can own a new car now. He doesn't have enough money to pay utilities and rent an apartment and own a new car. Now think about that. In 1975, at the age of—what was I, 19, 20 years old? I had a new car and a new house and was working at Caterpillar and I had money to burn. When I got married, one income could have sent my kids through college. Two incomes can't do it now.[66]

The disparate opportunities between Legel and his son are endemic at Caterpillar. John Arnold, a forklift driver at the company's materials handling plant, earns five dollars per hour less than more senior co-workers doing the same work. His father was a union millwright, one of the best-paying jobs at Caterpillar that held out the possibility that Arnold might himself make a similarly comfortable living. "When I was a kid," Arnold recalled, "he was making some good money. I was hoping that I could eventually get to where my dad's at." Instead, he struggles to make ends meet. As with Legel's son, the result has been an inability to realize the security and independence through unionized industrial labor—such as home ownership and saving for the

[66] Legel Interview.

future—that their parents attained through Caterpillar, and that the postwar upsurge in union membership provided working-class Americans. While Arnold is single, Scott Wilcoxon is married at age twenty-six, with three children. Operating five computer-controlled cutting machines at Caterpillar, Wilcoxon as a lower-tier worker earns eighty percent of the wages that others do. His family's budget is tight. "We can afford our food and gas," Wilcoxon says. "But we can't go out and eat at a nice restaurant. We can't go to a movie…The only way I can afford Christmas presents is by working seven days a week to make extra money."[67] Older workers are hardly immune from the climate of insecurity permeating working-class life. The decline of good industrial jobs has also squeezed middle-aged homeowners who have struggled to maintain their modest foothold. Nancy Muse and her husband, Robert, had to eliminate most discretionary spending after he was laid off from his machinist job at Northrup Aircraft in Los Angeles. His landing a maintenance job at half his machinist's salary meant the family lived in fear, closer to the poverty line and "day to day. You don't plan for the future anymore."[68]

Conclusion

The UAW's reliance on a legalistic strategy, using the NLRB to pressure Caterpillar to withdraw its demands for concessions as labor board charges mounts, largely proved a failure. Caterpillar used this strategy to its own advantage, largely by contesting and summarily ignoring the NLRB rulings and any animosity they generated among the general public. Having defeated the union for the second time in less than four years, the company resumed its harsh, punitive attacks on the returning strikers, abridging their workplace rights, intimidating them with the presence of Vance's paramilitary security contingent, and relocating work from unionized factories to non-union ones before making any substantive progress in negotiations with the

[67] Greenhouse, *The Big Squeeze*, 263-265.
[68] New York Times Special Report, *The Downsizing of America* (New York, New York Times Company, 1996), 97.

UAW. These pressure tactics helped the company not just win the labor disputes and deep concessions from the union. They unraveled the system of pattern bargaining the UAW had constructed and sustained with other earthmoving companies. In the process, Caterpillar illustrated to corporate America that a two-tier wage structure could be demanded even from strong unions, and attained. The two-tier system challenged a fundamental aspect of the New Deal order that had survived until the 1990s—the concept of equal wages for equal work that unions and workers often advanced, with notable exceptions especially for women, from the 1930s onward.[69]

By failing to cultivate broader solidarity networks particularly on an international level to match the far-flung scope of Caterpillar's operations, by relying too heavily on legalistic challenges to Caterpillar's pattern of abridging basic workplace rights, and by exposing itself again to permanent replacement with its ill-fated 1994-1995 strike, the UAW suffered a serious, very public loss against Caterpillar. Along with the AFL-CIO, it revealed the moribund, stultifying position of organized labor at the end of the twentieth century, beset by ossified, outmoded approaches to labor relations and methods of confronting the vast expansion of corporate power. Guided by nationalism, which proved to simultaneously be a galvanizing and circumscribing force for its members, the UAW failed to develop an effective counter-narrative to the logic and structures of capitalism that had allowed it to expand around the globe. In particular, the UAW and many AFL-CIO unions have failed to rethink and redefine their parameters of class, nation, and race that became more entrenched in the post-World War Two period, at the same time that the globalization of capitalism and industry expanded the global working class. The borders between American workers and their counterparts abroad had

[69] See Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex During World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987) for gendered pay differences in auto and electrical work.

parallels within their own communities, especially along black-white racial lines, that further limited the list of potential allies and subdivided the working class, despite mounting economic pressures that most of them shared.[70] Until these groups work to overcome these barriers, until they develop new and innovative methods to confront corporate power where it operates nationally and internationally and until unions strive to expand their circles of "we" to include, work with, and learn from a broadening, more racially heterogeneous, diffuse, and global working class, they will continue to risk the type of cataclysmic defeat that the UAW suffered at the hands of Caterpillar.

[70] Kim Moody, *Workers in a Lean World: Unions in the International Economy* (London: Verso, 1997).

Tables

Table 1.1 City of Peoria Population, Total and African American

Year	**Total Population**	**African American Population**
1900	56,100	1,402
1910	66,950	1,569
1920	76,121	2,130
1930	104,969	3,037
1940	105,087	2,826

Source: Adapted from Romeo B. Garrett, *The Negro in Peoria* (Peoria, IL: Romeo B. Garrett, 1973), 78.

Table 1.2: Number, Acreage, and Value of Farms, Peoria County—1880-1954

Year	Number of Farms	Total Farm Acreage	Average Size of Farm (acres)	Value per Farm	Value per Acre
1880	2,956	333,015	112.7	4,529	40.19
1890	2,581	339,723	131.6	7,693	58.46
1900	2,813	357,091	126.9	7,991	62.97
1910	2,717	353,206	130.0	16,250	125.00
1920	2,499	348,711	139.5	29,213	209.41
1930	2,372	332,754	140.3	19,263	137.31
1940	2,516	339,243	134.8	13,744	101.93
1945	2,260	339,587	150.3	18,829	125.31
1950	2,252	334,801	148.7	29,008	183.07
1954	1,981	318,398	160.7	46,589	273.33

Source: Adapted from City Planning and Zoning Commission, *Planning Peoria: A Master Plan Report* (Peoria, IL, 1969), 97.

Table 2.1: Minority Employment by Occupation as of February 1, 1965

Occupation	African Americans (#)	Other Nonwhite (#)
Officials and managers	1	5
Professionals	2	13
Technical	4	5
Office and clerical	42	26
Craftsmen (skilled)	38	45
Operatives (semi-skilled)	581	151
Laborers (unskilled)	285	26
Service Workers	53	1
TOTAL	1006	272
Percentage of Total US Workforce	2.80%	0.76%

Source: Adapted from National Industrial Conference Board, *Company Experience with Negro Employment: Studies in Personnel Policy, No. 201 Volume I—Caterpillar Tractor Co. Case Study* (New York: National Industrial Conference Board, Inc., 1966), 104-105.

Table 2.2 Comparison in National Terms of Average Hourly Wages, Based on the Exchange Rates in US Dollars and as Index

Caterpillar	Hourly Wage for Unskilled Workers in US Dollars	Index (US Wages = 100)	Hourly Wage Semi-Skilled Workers in US Dollars	Index (US Wages = 100)	Hourly Wages Skilled Workers in US Dollars	Index (US Wages = 100)
U.S.	**$3.94**	**100**	**$4.75**	**100**	**$5.58**	**100**
Belgium	**1.31-1.43**	**33-36**	**1.24-1.53**	**26-32**	**1.48-1.66/1.57-1.94**	**27-30/28-35**
France	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**1.15**	**21**

Source: "Pay Conditions in the Plants of Multinational Corporations Making Agricultural Machinery," 14, IMF World Agricultural Implement Industry Conference, Brussels, May 15-17, 1972, UAW President's Office Leonard Woodcock Collection, Box 202, Folder #5, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs-Wayne State University.

Tables 3.1 Employment and Earnings, Peoria Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, 1984 (Statistics based on March figures)

Occupation	Total Employees	Average Earnings/Month	Average Hours Worked/Month	Average Hourly Wage
Machinery (Not Electrical)	22,700	$512.94	42.5	$13.22
Manufacturing	34,200	$487.91	39.7	$12.39
Food and Kindred Products	1,500	$435.17	43.3	$10.05
Durable Goods	28,800	$497.77	39.6	$12.57
Printing and Publishing	1,900	$411.54	34.7	$11.86
Nondurable Goods	5,500	$438.46	40.3	$10.88

Table 3.1 Continued: Employment and Earnings, Peoria Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, 1985 (Statistics based on March figures)

Occupation	Total Employees	Average Earnings/Month	Average Hours Worked/Month	Average Hourly Wage
Machinery (Not Electrical	20,400	$572.98	42.0	$13.39
Manufacturing	31,700	$522.50	41.6	$12.56
Food and Kindred Products	1,600	$370.02	42.0	$9.56
Durable Goods	26,300	$539.55	41.6	$12.80
Printing and Publishing	1,900	$511.52	42.1	$11,71
Nondurable Goods	5,400	$439.71	41.6	$10.69

Table 3.1 Continued: Employment and Earnings, Peoria Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, 1986 (Statistics based on March figures)

Occupation	Total Employees	Average Earnings/Month	Average Hours Worked/Month	Average Hourly Wage
Machinery (Not Electrical)	20,000	$604.46	42.9	$13.61
Manufacturing	31,400	$540.17	42.3	$12.49
Food and Kindred Products	1,800	$320.83	37.7	$8.20
Durable Goods	25,600	$568.76	42.7	$13.02
Printing and Publishing	1,800	$510.04	41.0	$12.15
Nondurable Goods	5,800	$422.01	40.5	$10.24

Table 3.1 Continued: Employment and Earnings, Peoria Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, 1987 (Statistics based on March figures)

Occupation	Total Employees	Average Earnings/Month	Average Hours Worked/Month	Average Hourly Wage
Machinery (Not Electrical)	19,900	$618.62	43.2	$14.16
Manufacturing	30,500	$540.56	42.1	$12.95
Food and Kindred Products	1,700	$284.61	35.8	$8.51
Durable Goods	24,800	$577.86	42.1	$14.11
Printing and Publishing	1,900	$482.60	38.0	$12.44
Nondurable Goods	5,700	$396.87	39.1	$10.51

Table 3.1 Continued: Employment and Earnings, Peoria Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, 1988 (Statistics based on March figures)

Occupation	Total Employees	Average Earnings/Month	Average Hours Worked/Month	Average Hourly Wage
Machinery (Not Electrical)	21,200	$669.44	46.2	$14.32
Manufacturing	33.400	$597.64	44.6	$12.97
Food and Kindred Products	1,700	$379.47	41.7	$7.95
Durable Goods	27,300	$635.15	45.4	$13.62
Printing and Publishing	2,100	$452.66	36.3	$12.70
Nondurable Goods	6,100	$426.21	41.1	$10.23

Table 5.1 Work Stoppages Involving 1,000 Workers or More in the U.S. 1950-1994

Year	Work Stoppages	Workers Involved (Thousands)	Days Idle (Thousands)
1950	**424**	**1,698**	**30,390**
1953	**437**	**1,623**	**18,130**
1960	**222**	**896**	**13,260**
1970	**381**	**2,468**	**57,761**
1980	**187**	**795**	**20,844**
1990	**44**	**185**	**5,926**
1993	**35**	**182**	**3,981**

Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Compensation and Working Conditions* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, September 1994), 78.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Federal, State, and City Governmental Reports

Congressional Record. *Proceedings and Debates of the 105th Congress, Second Session* Volume 144—part 14, September 9, 1998 to September 21, 1998. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1998.

Illinois Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment, Research, and Analysis. *Illinois Wage Survey for Region 4 and Peoria Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area* (SMSA). Chicago, IL: Illinois Bureau of Employment Security, Research and Analysis Subdivision, 1985-1993.

Peoria City Planning and Zoning Commission. By Richard E. Dunlavy. *Planning Peoria: A Master Plan Report.* Peoria, IL, 1969.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *Census of Housing: 1970 Block Statistics Final Report HC (3) 71 Peoria, Ill. Urbanized Area.* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1970.

United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Handbook of Labor Statistics, Bulletin 1865*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975.

----------, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Employment and Earnings*, Vol. 30, No. 1, January 1983. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983.

----------, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Report on Employment, Hours and Earnings, State of Illinois, Peoria 1985-93.* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1994.

United States House of Representative, Committee on Veterans Affairs. By Arthur Egendorf. *Legacies of Vietnam: Comparative Adjustments of Veterans and Their Peers.* Washington, DC: United States Government Office, 1981.

United States House Of Representatives. *Subcommittee of Oversight and Investigations Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities, U.S. House of Representatives, 104th Congress, First Session*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995.

U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means, *Hearings, H.R. 9900, Trade Expansion Act of 1962, 87th Congress, 2nd Session*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1962.

United States Senate. *Hearings Before the Committee on Finance, United States Senate, 85th Congress, 2nd Session, on H.R. 12591*, June 24, 1958. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1958.

United States Senate, Special Committee to Study problems of American Small Business. By John M. Blair, Harrison F. Houghton, and Matthew Rose. *Economic Concentration and World War II: Report of the Smaller War Plants Corporation.* Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1946.

United States Work Projects Administration, Illinois. *Real Property Survey and Low Income Housing Area Survey for Peoria, Illinois, made by the Work Projects Administration, November, 1939-March, 1941*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1941.

Legal Cases and Union Grievance and Arbitration Cases

United Auto Workers Local 974. Arbitration Award, Case No. GS-87-P-001. Donald Guthrie.

United Auto Workers Local 974. Arbitration Award, Case No. GS-87-P-002. Ricky Frye.

United Auto Workers Local 974. Arbitration Award, Case No. GS-87-P-004. Harley Bantz.

United Auto Workers Local 974. Arbitration Award, Case No. GS-87-P-005, Richard Bown.

United Auto Workers Local 974. Arbitration Award, Case No. GS-87-P-006. Michael Bushell.

United Auto Workers Local 974. Arbitration Award, Case No. PA-71-P-007. Theodore Hartl.

United Auto Workers Local 974. Arbitration Award, Case No. PA-87-P-006, Bruce Goeken.

United Auto Workers Local 974. Arbitration Award, Case No. PA-87-P-007, Louis Beck.

United Auto Workers Local 974. Arbitration Award, Case No. PA-88-P-007. Discharge-Eads.

United Steelworkers of America v. American Manufacturing Co. (1960), 363 U.S. 564.

United Steelworkers of America v. Enterprise Wheel & Car Corp. (1960), 363 U.S. 593.

United Steelworkers of America v. Warrior & Gulf (1960), 363 U.S. 574.

Manuscript Collections

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois

Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs—Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan

United Auto Workers Agricultural Implements Department

United Auto Workers International Affairs Department, Herman Rebhan Collection

United Auto Workers International Affairs Department, Victor Reuther and Lewis Carliner Collection

United Auto Workers International Executive Board Meetings Collection

United Auto Workers President's Office, Douglas Fraser Collection

United Auto Workers President's Office, Leonard Woodcock Collection

United Auto Workers President's Office, Walter P. Reuther Collection

United Auto Workers Region 4

United Auto Workers Research Department

United Auto Workers Unbound Newspapers

United Auto Workers Vice-President's Office, Irving Bluestone Collection

Jerry Tucker Personal Papers, St. Louis, Missouri

Peoria Public Library, Peoria, Illinois

United Auto Workers Local 974, East Peoria, Illinois

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Archives, Urbana, Illinois

ILIR Library Union Vertical File, 1912-2001

Milton Derber Papers, 1938-1987

Newspapers, Periodicals, and Trade Publications

American Metal Market

Business Horizons

Business Week

Caterpillar Annual Reports, 1938-2000

Caterpillar Folks

Caterpillar News and Views

Caterpillar Tracks and Treads

Chicago Tribune

Crain's Chicago Business

Decatur Herald and Review

Detroit Free-Press

Forbes

Fortune

Freeman

Indianapolis Star

In These Times

Labor Notes

Labor Paper (Peoria, IL)

Los Angeles Times

Militant

Modern Materials Handling

New York Times

Pekin Daily Times

Peoria Journal

Peoria Journal-Star

Peoria Star

Skill

Software Magazine

Stark's Off-Highway Ledger

Stet

United Auto Workers Contract Action Times

United Auto Workers Local 751 News

United Auto Workers Local 974 News

UAW Solidarity

UAW Solidar Report

Wall Street Journal

Washington Post

Oral Histories

Brown, Jerry. Interview at his home, Tremont, Il, April 3, 2007.

Corbin, Rich. Interview by telephone with author, March 10, 2004.

Evans, Jane. Interview at the UAW Local 974 union hall, East Peoria, Il, April 23, 2011.

Frakes, Steve. Interview at McDonald's, Morton, Il, November 14, 2006.

Green, Tony. Interview at Hotel Pere Marquette, Peoria, Il, October 13, 2006.

LaHood, David. Interview at the UAW local 974 union hall, East Peoria, Il, April 23, 2011.

Legel, Mike. Interview at the Tremont Public Library, October 23, 2006.

O'Connor, Jim. Interview, at his home, Marquette Heights, Il, December 18, 2006.

Schmidt, Wayne. Interview at his home, Pekin, Il, January 10, 2007.

Solomon, Larry. Interview at his home, Cerro Gordo, Il, November 24, 2004.

Tucker, Jerry. Interview at his home, Dt. Louis, Mo., October 30, 2004.

Williams, David. Interview at his home, Peoria, Il., November 21, 2006.

Williams, Fred. Interview at his home, Peoria, Il., December 14, 2006.

Secondary Sources

Case Studies

Bartlett, Christopher A. and U. Srinivasa Rangan. "Caterpillar Tractor Co." Harvard Business School Case Study 9-385-276, 1985, revised September 12, 1988.

----------. "Komatsu Limited." Harvard Business School Case Study 9-385-277, revised September 12, 1988.

Dissertations and Theses

Bateman, David N. "Institutional Business Communications, Specifically Communications of Caterpillar Tractor Company in Support of Holding the Line on Wages, 1960-1961." Ph.D. diss., Southern Illinois University, 1970.

Blankinship, John T. “International Expansion of Firms: Selected Theories and a Case Study.” M. S. Thesis, Southern Illinois University, 1964.

Moberg, David F. “Rattling the Golden Chains: Conflict and Consciousness of Auto Workers.” Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1978.

Murphy, Boyd Alma. “History of the Peoria labor movement, 1929-1939.” M.A. Thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1955.

Willis, John Martin. “Who Died In Vietnam: An Analysis of the Social Background of Vietnam War Casualties.” Ph.D. diss., Purdue University, 1975.

Books and Articles

Adde, Leo. *Nine Cities: The Anatomy of Downtown Renewal.* Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 1969.

Allen, Howard W. and Vincent A. Lacey. *Illinois Elections, 1818-1990: Candidates and County Returns for President, Governor, Senate, and House of Representatives*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992.

Appy, Christian G. *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993.

Aronowitz, Stanley. *False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness.* NY: McGraw-Hill, 1973.

Ashby, Steven K. and C.J. Hawking. *Staley: The Fight for a New American Labor Movement.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

Atleson, James B. *Labor and the Wartime State: Labor Relations and Law during World War II.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998.

----------. “Wartime labor regulation, the industrial pluralists, and the law of collective bargaining.” Nelson Lichtenstein and Howell John Harris eds., *Industrial Democracy in America: The Ambiguous Promise,* 142-175. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Babson, Steve. *Lean Work: Empowerment and Exploitation in the Global Auto Industry*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995.

Barnes, Sandra L. *The Cost of Being Poor: A Comparative Study of Life in Poor Urban Neighborhoods in Gary, Indiana.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005.

Barnet, Richard and Ronald E. Muller. *Global Reach: The Power of the Multinational Corporations.* NY: Simon and Schuster, 1974.

Barrett, James R. *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago's Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987.

Bartlett, Donald L. and James B. Steele. *America: What Went Wrong?* Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1992.

Belmonte, Laura A. *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War.*

Bernstein, Irving. *The Turbulent Years: A History of the American Worker, 1933-1941.* New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1970.

Blau, Joel. *Illusions of Prosperity: America's Working Families in an Age of Economic Insecurity.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Bluestone, Barry and Irving Bluestone. *Negotiating the Future: A Labor Perspective on American Business.* NY: Basic Books, 1992.

---------- and Bennett Harrison. *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry.* New York: Basic Books, 1982.

----------. *The Great U-Turn: Corporate Restructuring and the Polarizing of America.* New York: Basic Books, 1990.

Bordo, Michael D., Alan M. Taylor, and Jeffrey G. Williamson. *Globalization in Historical Perspective.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Boyle, Kevin. *Organized Labor and American Politics, 1894-1994.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998.

----------. *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism 1945-1968.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Brecher, Jeremy, Tim Costello, and Brendan Smith. *Globalization from Below: The Power of Solidarity.* Boston: South End Press, 2000.

----------. *Strike!* Boston: South End Press, 1972.

Brinkley, Alan. *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.

Brody, David. *Labor Embattled: History, Power, Rights*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005.

----------. *Workers in Industrial America: Essays on the 20th Century Struggle* 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Bronfenbrenner, Kate. *Global Unions: Challenging Transnational Capital through Cross-Border Campaigns.* Ithaca: Cornell IRL Press, 2007.

----------. *Uneasy Terrain: The Impact of Capital Mobility on Workers, Wages, and Union Organizing.* Cornell University ILR School: Research Studies and Reports, 2000.

Buelens, Frans ed. *Globalization and the Nation-State.* Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 1999.

Carew, Anthony. *Labour Under the Marshall Plan: The Politics of Productivity and the Marketing of Management Science.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987.

Cohen, Isaac. "The Caterpillar Labor Dispute and the UAW, 1991-1998." *Labor Studies Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Winter 2003), 77-99.

Cohen, Lizabeth. *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America.* New York: Vintage, 2003.

----------. *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Cowie, Jefferson. *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor.* NY: New Press, 2001.

----------. *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class.* New York: New Press, 2010.

Craige, Betty Jean. *American Patriotism in a Global Society.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.

Craypo, Charles and Bruce Nissen eds. *Grand Designs: The Impact of Corporate Strategies on Workers, Unions, and Communities.* Ithaca: Cornell ILR Press, 1993.

Dandeneau, Steven P. *A Town Abandoned: Flint, Michigan, Confronts Deindustrialization.* Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996.

Davis, Mike. *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the US Working Class.* London: Verso, 1986.

Derber, Milton. *Labor in Illinois: The Affluent Years, 1945-1980.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

Despain, James. *And Dignity For All: Unlocking Greatness Through Values-Based on Leadership.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Financial Times/Prentice Hall, 2003.

Devinatz, Victor G. "A Heroic Defeat: The Caterpillar Labor Dispute and the UAW, 1991-1998." *Labor Studies Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Summer 2005), 1-18.

Dower, John. "Race, Language, and War in Two Cultures: World War II in Asia." Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch eds., *The War in American Culture: Society and Consciousness During World War II*, 169-201. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

----------. *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1993.

Duberman, Martin B. *Paul Robeson.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988.

Dubofsky, Melvyn. *The State and Labor in Modern America.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America.* New York: Metropolitan Press, 2001.

Elazar, Daniel. *Cities of the Prairie: The Metropolitan Frontier and American Politics.* NY: Basic Books, 1970.

Fairris, David. *Labor-Management Relations in Twentieth-Century American Manufacturing.* New York: Routledge, 1997.

Fantasia, Rick and Kim Voss. *Hard Work: Remaking the American Labor Movement*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Faue, Elizabeth. *Community of Suffering and Struggle: Women, Men, and the Labor Movement in Minneapolis, 1915-1945.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991.

Feurer, Rosemary. *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900-1950.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006.

Filipelli, Ronald L. "The Historical Context of Postwar Industrial Relations," in Bruce Nissen ed., *US Labor Relations, 1945-1989; Accommodation and Conflict,* 137-171. NY: Garland Publishing, 1990.

Fine, Sidney. *Sit-down: The General Motors Strike of 1936-1937.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969.

Fink, Gary M. "Labor Law Revision and the End of the Postwar Labor Accord." Kevin Boyle ed., *Organized Labor and American Politics, 1894-1994: The Liberal-Labor Alliance,* 239-257. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998.

---------- and Hugh Davis Graham eds. *The Carter Presidency: Policy Choices in the Post-New Deal Era.* Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998.

Fink, Leon. *The Maya of Morganton: Work and Community in the Nuevo New South.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Fones-Wolf, Elizabeth. *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism 1945-1960.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994.

Fousek, John. *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

Frank, Dana. *Buy American: The Untold Story of Economic Nationalism.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1999.

Franklin, Stephen. *Three Strikes: Labor's Heartland Losses and What They Mean for Working Americans.* NY: The Guilford Press, 2001.

Fraser, Steven and Gary Gerstle. *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Gangemi, Columbus R. and Joseph J. Torres, "The Corporate Campaign at Caterpillar." *Journal of Labor Research*, Volume XVII, Number 3 (Summer 1996), 377-394.

Garrett, Romeo B. *The Negro in Peoria.* Peoria, IL: Romeo B. Garrett, 1973.

Garrow, David J. *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.* NY: Vintage, 1988.

Getman, Julius G. *The Betrayal of Local 14.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University ILR Press, 1999.

Geohagen, Thomas. *Which Side Are You On? Trying to Be for Organized Labor When It's Flat on Its Back.* New York: Plume, 1991.

Germain, Randall G. *Globalization and Its Critics: Perspectives from Political Economy.* New York: St. Martin's Press in association with Political Economy Research Centre, University of Sheffield, 2000.

Gerstle, Gary. *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Goldfield, Michael. *The Decline of Organized Labor in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Gordon, David M., Richard Edwards, Michael Reich. *Segmented Work, Divided Workers: The Historical Transformation of Labor in the United States.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

----------. *Fat and Mean: The Corporate Squeeze of Working Americans and the Myth of Managerial "Downsizing."* New York: Martin Kessler Books, 1996.

Greenhouse, Steven. *The Big Squeeze: Tough Times for the American Worker.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.

Greider, William. *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism.* New York: Touchstone, 1997.

Griffin, Keith. *Studies in Globalization and Economic Transition.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

Griffith, Robert. *The Politics of Fear: Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate.* New York: Hayden Book Company, 1970.

Gross, James A. *Broken Promise: The Subversion of U.S. Labor Relations.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010.

Halpern, Martin. *UAW Politics in the Cold War Era.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988.

Harris, Howell John. *The Right to Manage: Industrial Relations Policies of American Business in the 1940s.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982.

Haycraft, William R. *Yellow Steel: The Story of the Earthmoving Equipment Industry.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press 2000.

High, Steven. *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969-1984.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003.

Hirsch, Arnold. *The Making of the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Hoerr, John P. *And the Wolf Finally Came: The Decline of the American Steel Industry.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988.

Howland, Merle. *Plant Closings and Worker Displacement: The Regional Issues.* Kalamazoo, Michigan: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 1988.

Hsu, Cathy H.C. ed. *Legalized Casino Gaming in the United States: The Economic and Social Impact.* New York: Hapworth Hospitality Press, 1999.

Hughes, Charles L. *Making Unions Unnecessary.* New York: Executive Enterprises Publications Co., 1976.

Jacoby, Sanford M. *Embedded Corporation: Corporate Governance and Employment Relations in Japan and the United States.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Johnson, Daniel M., Rebecca Monroe Veach. *The Middle-Size Cities of Illinois: Their People, Politics, and Quality of Life.* Springfield, IL: Sangamon State University Press, 1980.

Juran, Joseph, M. *Managerial Breakthrough: The Classic Book on Improving Management Performance.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995.

Juravich, Tom and Kate Bronfenbrenner. *Ravenswood: The Steelworkers' Victory and the Revival of American Labor.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Kaplan, Amy and Donald E. Pease eds. *Cultures of United States Imperialism.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.

Kazin, Michael. *The Populist Persuasion: An American History.* New York: Basic Books, 1995.

Kellman, Peter. *Divided We Fall: The Story of the Paperworker's Union and the Future of Labor.* Croton-on-Hudson, NY: Apex Press, 2004.

Kessler-Harris, Alice. *Gendering Labor History*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007.

Kochan, Thomas A., Harry C. Katz, and Robert B. McKersie. *The Transformation of American Industrial Relations.* Ithaca: Cornell ILR Press, 1994.

----------, Harry C. Katz, and Nancy R. Mower. *Worker Participation and American Unions: Threat or Opportunity?* Kalamazoo, Mich : W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 1984.

LaFeber, Walter. *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*. NY: Norton Press, 1984.

Langhorne, Richard. *The Coming of Globalization: Its Evolution and Contemporary Consequences*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Lichtenstein, Nelson. "Conflict Over Workers Control: The Automobile Industry in World War II," in Michael H. Frisch and Daniel J. Walkowitz eds., *Working-Class America: Essays on Labor, Community, and American Society*, 284-311. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983.

----------. "Great Expectations: The Promise of Industrial Jurisprudence and Its Demise, 1930-1960," in Nelson Lichtenstein and Howell John Harris eds., *Industrial Democracy in America: The Ambiguous Promise,* 113-141. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

----------. *Labor's War at Home: The CIO in World War II.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

----------. *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor.* NY: BasicBooks, 1995.

---------- and Steven Meyer eds. *On the Line: Essays in the History of Auto Work.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

----------. *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Linkon, Sherry Lee and John Russo. *Steeltown U.S.A.: Work and Memory in Youngstown.* Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2002.

Lipsitz, George. "Dilemmas of Beset Nationhood: Patriotism, the Family, and Economic Change in the 1970s and 1980s." John Bodnar ed., *Bonds of Affection: Americans Define Their Patriotism,* 251-272. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.

----------. *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994.

Loewen, James W. *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism.* New York: New Press, 2005.

Lynd, Staughton and Alice Lynd. *The New Rank and File.* Ithaca: Cornell ILR Press, 2000.

Machinery and Allied Products Institute and Council for Technological Advancement. *The Caterpillar Approach to Industrial Relations.* Machinery and Allied Products Institute, 1966.

Main, Jeremy. *Quality Wars: The Triumphs and Defeats of American Business.* NY: The Free Press, 1994.

Mann, Eric. *Taking on General Motors: A Case Study of the Campaign to Keep GM Van Nuys Open.* Los Angeles: Center for Labor Research and Education, Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, Los Angeles, 1987.

Marshall, Ray. *Unheard Voices: Labor and Economic Policy in a Competitive World.* New York: Basic Books, 1987.

May, George W. *Students' History of Peoria County, Illinois.* Galesburg, IL: Wagoner Printing, 1968.

McCall, Phil. "'We Had to Stick Together:' Individual Preferences, Collective Struggle, and the Formation of Social Consciousness." *Science & Society*, Vol. 72, No. 2, April 2008, 147-181.

McGirr, Lisa. *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.

McKee, Guian A. *The Problem of Jobs: Liberalism, Race, and Deindustrialization in Philadelphia, 1945-1973.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

McKenzie, Richard B. *Competing Visions: The Political Conflict over America's Economic Future.* Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1985.

McKormick, Thomas J. *America's Half-Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War and After.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2nd edition, 1995.

Metzgar, Jack. "'Running the Plant Backwards' in UAW Region 5." *Labor Research Review,* Fall 1985, 35-43.

----------. *Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000.

Meyerowitz, Joanne ed. *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960.*Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.

Milkman, Ruth. *Farewell to the Factory: Auto Workers in the Late Twentieth Century.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

----------. *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex During World War II.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987.

Mishel, Lawrence Jared Bernstein, and John Schmitt. *The State of Working America, 1998-1999.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Mittelman, James H. ed. *Globalization: Critical Reflections.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publications, 1996.

----------. *The Globalization Syndrome: Transformation and Resistance.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Montgomery, David. *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

----------. *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Moody, Kim. *An Injury to All: The Decline of American Unionism*. New York: Verso, 1988.

----------. *US Labor in Trouble and Transition: The Failure of Reform from Above, the Promise of Revival from Below.* London: Verso, 2007.

----------. *Workers in a Lean World: Unions in the International Economy.* London: Verso, 1997.

National Industrial Conference Board. *Company Experience with Negro Employment, V. 1-2.* New York: National Industrial Conference Board, 1966.

Naumann, William L. *The Story of Caterpillar Tractor Co.* New York: Newcomen Society in North America, 1977.

Nelson, Daniel. *Farm and Factory: Workers in the Midwest, 1880-1990.* Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1995.

----------. *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

New York Times. *Special Report: The Downsizing of America.* New York: Times Books, 1996.

Nissen, Bruce. "A Post-World War II 'Social Accord?' in Bruce Nissen ed., *US Labor Relations, 1945-1989*: *Accommodation and Conflict,* 173-205. NY: Garland Publishing, 1990.

----------. *Unions in a Globalized Environment: Changing Borders, Organizational Boundaries, and Social Roles.* Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002.

Noble, David F. *America by Design: Science, Technology, and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism.* New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1977.

Nolde, Gilbert C. ed. *All in a Day's Work: Seventy-Five years of Caterpillar.* Hong Kong: Forbes Custom Publishing, 2000.

Norwood, Stephen H. *Strikebreaking and Intimidation: Mercenaries and Masculinity in Twentieth-Century America.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

Nystrom, Derek. *Hard Hats, Rednecks, and Macho Men: Class in 1970s American Cinema.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Ozanne, Robert. *A Century of Labor-Management Relations at McCormick and International Harvester.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967.

----------, with the assistance of Elsa Klemp. *The Negro in the Farm Equipment and Construction Machinery Industries.* Philadelphia: Industrial Research Unit, Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania; distributed by University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972.

Parker, Mike. "Industrial Relations Myth and Shop-Floor Reality: the 'Team Concept' in the Auto Industry." Nelson Lichtenstein and Howell John Harris eds., *Industrial Democracy in America: The Ambiguous Promise,* 249-274. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

----------. *Inside the Circle: A Union Guide to Quality of Work Life.* Boston: South End Press, 1985.

---------- and Jane Slaughter. *Choosing Sides: Unions and the Team Concept.* Boston: South End Press, 1988.

----------. *Working Smart: A Union Guide to Participation Programs and Reengineering.* Detroit: Labor Notes Press, 1994.

Perks, Robert and Alistair Thomson eds. *The Oral History Reader.* London: Routledge, 2002.

Perlstein, Rick. *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2001.

----------. *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America.* New York: Scribner, 2008.

Perusek, Glenn. "Leadership and Opposition in the United Auto Workers." Glenn Perusek and Kent Worcester eds., *Trade Union Politics: American Unions and Economic Change, 1960s-1990s*, 169-187. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1995.

Phillips, Brian. *Global Production and Domestic Decay: Plant Closings in the U.S.*New York: Garland Publishing, 1998.

Portz, John. *The Politics of Plant Closings*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1990.

Preis, Art. *Labor's Giant Step: Twenty Years of the CIO.* New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1964.

Price, John. "Lean Production at Suzuki and Toyota: A Historical Perspective." Steve Babson ed., *Lean Work: Empowerment and Exploitation in the Global Auto Industry*, 81-107. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995.

Puette, William J. *Through Jaundiced Eyes: How the Media View Organized Labor.* Ithaca: Cornell ILR Press, 1992.

Rachleff, Peter. *Hard-Pressed in the Heartland: The Hormel Strike and the Future of the Labor Movement.* Boston: South End Press, 1993.

Richards, Lawrence. *Union-Free America: Workers and Anti-Union Culture.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008.

Rosow, Jerome M. *Teamwork: Joint Labor-Management Programs in America*. New York: Pergamon Press, 1986.

Safford, Sean. *Why the Garden club Couldn't Save Youngstown: The Transformation of the Rust Belt.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Schacter, Daniel L. *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past.* New York: Basic Books, 1996.

Schaller, Michael. *Right Turn: American Life in the Reagan-Bush Era, 1980-1992.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Schatz, Ronald. *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse, 1923-1960.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983.

Schrecker, Ellen. *Many Are The Crimes: McCarthyism in America.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Schulman, Bruce. *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics*. New York: Da Capo Press, 2001.

Scranton, Philip. *The Second Wave: Southern Industrialization from the 1940s to the 1970s.* Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2007.

Shermer, Elizabeth Tandy. "Origins of the Conservative Ascendancy: Barry Goldwater's Early Senate Career and the De-legitimization of Organized Labor," *Journal of American History* Vol. 95 No. 3 (December 2008), 678-709.

Solomon, Robert. *The Transformation of the World Economy.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

Spillman, Lyn. *Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Stein, Judith. *Pivotal Decade: How the United States Traded Factories for Finance in the Seventies.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

----------. *Running Steel, Running America: Race, Economic Policy, and the Decline of American Liberalism.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents.* New York: W.W. Norton, 2002.

Stromquist, Shelton. *Solidarity and Survival: An Oral History of Iowa Labor in the Twentieth Century.* Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993.

Sugrue, Thomas J. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Terkel, Studs. *The Great Divide: Second Thoughts on the American Dream.* New York: Pantheon, 1988.

----------. *Race: How Blacks and Whites Think and Feel about the American Obsession.* New York: New Press, 1992.

----------. *Working: People Talk about What They Do All Day and How They Feel about What They Do.* New York: Ballantine, 1974.

Tomlins, Christopher L. *State and the Unions: Labor Relations, Law, and the Organized Labor Movement in America, 1880-1960.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Tomlinson, John. *Globalization and Culture.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Totsuka, Hideo. "The Transformation of Japanese Industrial Relations: A Case Study of the Automobile Industry." Steve Babson ed., *Lean Work: Empowerment and Exploitation in the Global Auto Industry*,108-130. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995.

Verna, Anil and Thomas A. Kochan. *Unions in a Globalized Environment: An International Perspective.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Wahl, Greg and Charles Bobbitt. *It Didn't Play in Peoria: Missed Chances of a Middle American Town.* Chicago, IL: Arcadia Publishing, 2009.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Waring, Stephen P. *Taylorism Transformed: Scientific Management Theory Since 1945.* Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1991.

Warren, Wilson J. *Struggling with "Iowa's Pride:" Labor Relations, Unionism, and Politics in the Rural Midwest since 1877.* Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000.

Whitburn, Joel. *Top Pop Singles, 1955-1986.* Menomonee Falls, WI: Record Research, 1987.

Wilentz, Sean. *The Age of Reagan: A History 1974-2008.* New York: HarperCollins, 2008.

Wolfe, Alan. *America at Century's End.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Womack, James P., Daniel T. Jones, and Daniel Roos. *The Machine that Changed the World*. NY: Rawson Associates, 1990.

Woolfson, Charles and John Foster. *Track Record: The Story of the Caterpillar Occupation.* London: Verso, 1988.

Yoshino, Michael Y. and U. Srinivasa Rangan. *Strategic Alliances: An Entrepreneurial Approach to Globalization*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1995.

Zelinsky, Wilbur. *Nation into State: The Shifting Symbolic Foundations of American Nationalism.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.

Zieger, Robert H. *The CIO: 1935-1955.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.